



Pages 20-21 Early fall on the plateau

With a high altitude and low temperatures, the grasslands of the nearby Bashang Plateau are the place to go to get a jumpstart on autumn.



Pages 12-13 Collection defines contemporary art

Finally "mainstream" after three decades on the fringe, contemporary pieces by 21 of China's masters of the form are being exhibited at the National Art Museum now through September 2.

Tears for the dead in Manila



CFP Photo

Only weeks after the Zhouqu flood, the government is again lowering its flags to remember the nine Hong Kong tourists killed Monday during a hostage crisis in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

The Chinese side has demanded a thorough investigation of how the crisis was handled and called on the Philippine government to make changes to ensure the safety of future Chinese travelers. The deaths have cast a long shadow over the holiday plans of many this coming National Day.

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Gov tempers justice with mercy in amended Criminal Law



The thirteen crimes will no longer be punishable by death if the amendment to the Criminal Law is passed.

Huang He / CFP Photo

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress began Monday its first reading of an amendment to the Criminal Law.

If passed, the law would slash the number of crimes subject to the death penalty and toughen punishment of organized crime.

The proposed amendment, the eighth to the 1997 version of the Criminal Law, is meant to further implement the government's policy to temper justice with mercy, according to a statement by the Chairmen's Council of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee.

It is also intended to educate and reform convicted criminals, the statement said.

Fewer executions

Current law stipulates that 68 crimes are punishable by the death penalty. However, the draft amendment would eliminate capital punishment for 13 economic-related non-violent offences, a drop-off about 19 percent.

The 13 crimes to no longer be

punishable by death include smuggling of cultural relics, gold, silver and other precious metals and rare animals and their products; falsely issuing exclusive value-added tax invoices to defraud export tax refunds or offset taxes; and teaching methods used to commit crimes.

The draft amendment also allows for leniency to offenders below 18 years or above 75, by stating that the death penalty is not to be applied to people 75 or older at the time of the crime.

Previously, only minors and pregnant women were exempt from capital punishment.

Tough on underground

As organized crime has become a threat to the public in some parts of the country, the amendment also prescribes tougher punishments for crimes by such organizations.

The government would be free to seize kingpins' assets and fine the members of underground organizations. Government employees who shield their underground

associates would face only five years in prison, compared with the current 10.

Organized crime is rampant in some parts of the country. A government crackdown started in February 2006 has brought down 1,400 gangs and confiscated 3,400 guns to date.

Protecting the public

Acts that endanger the public and draw complaints, including drunk driving, street racing, defaulting on payments to employees and human organ harvesting, have also been included in the draft amendment as crimes.

These acts were previously subject to only administrative or civil penalties.

In a bid to better protect disadvantaged groups, those convicted of forcing others to work may face penalties of up to seven years in prison, instead of only three years, and those who provide assistance to people organizing others for prostitution may face up to 10 years in prison.

(Xinhua)

Experts say reduced death penalty a worldwide trend

By Han Manman

The reduction of 13 potential death charges has received much attention. If the amendment becomes law, it would be the first time the number of crimes subject to death has been reduced since the first criminal law was passed in 1979.

"Considering China's current economic and social development, removing the death penalty for some economy-related non-violent offences, will not negatively affect social stability or public security," Xinhua quoted Li Shishi, director of Commission for Legislative Affairs of the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, as saying.

The amendment may be an important step for the country, said Teng Biao, law professor of China University of Political Science and Law.

Teng said that although Chinese law guards information about executions as state secrets, many people are executed every year. This, as well as the secretive nature of the judicial system when applying the penalty, has been one of the key anti-China criticisms by human rights advocates.

But he said the government has already made efforts to limit death penalty use in recent years to bring the government closer to international norms. One of the biggest steps was requiring the country's Supreme Court to review all death sentences before they are carried out.

In May this year, the government introduced new rules saying evidence obtained through torture and threats

cannot be used in criminal prosecutions and would be thrown out in death penalty cases that are appealed.

"This reduction of capital punishment is another significant change that shows the progress of the Chinese legal system and public awareness of the law," Teng said.

But white collar crime will still be punished severely, Teng said. Under the new rules, bribery would remain a capital offence.

"It's not time to abolish such [punishments for] financial crime given its huge impact on society," Teng said.

Teng said the country may eventually abolish the death penalties completely, but that "there is still some ways to go."

It is not known when the draft will become law. The amendment will be examined in a bimonthly session of the National People's Congress this week. In most cases, before a draft law is adopted, it must be read by the Standing Committee two or three times.

At least 1,252 people were reportedly executed in 24 countries in 2007: 88 percent of the executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the US, *The Guardian* reported.

More than 90 countries have abolished the death penalty: 40 countries that still have the death penalty on their books have not used it for more than a decade, said Liu Mingxiang, deputy dean at the law school of Renmin University of China.

The abolition of the death penalty has not led to a rise in crime in those countries which abolished it, Liu said.

Subway boom brings worries of efficiency and losses

By Zhao Hongyi

More than 1,500 kilometers of subway are under construction in China today, and another 2,500 kilometers are set to start construction in the next five years with an investment of more than 1,000 billion yuan.

There will be 6,100 kilometers of subway lines in the country by 2020, according to a report by the bimonthly magazine *Outlook*. But the boom has exposed new problems of inefficient operation and financial loss plaguing the subway industry.

"In the 12th Five Year Plan (2011-2015), investment on subway construction will exceed investment in aviation construction and water transportation; it follows only railway and highway construction," the report said, quoting Li Xiaojiang, director of the Institute of Urban

Transportation Studies under the Ministry of Construction.

Last year, as many as 40 cities applied to expand or start their subway systems: 28 were approved by the central government. But the huge investment has raised doubts about how local city government can improve its efficiency and repay its subway loans.

China Development Bank is the most important financing source of most of these projects. By March this year, the bank had issued 345 billion loans with another 135 billion under consideration, Zhang Qingmin, director of project evaluation for the bank, said.

In 2003, the central government encouraged diversification of financing sources and operation. Local governments were allowed to finance their projects using overseas

commercial banks and issue bonds and shares. They were also encouraged to use joint construction, operation and leasing rather than relying entirely on the central government.

But the financial crisis damaged market-oriented financing. "If you can obtain money from the central government, why would you try to get it on the market?" said Jin Yongxiang, general manager of Dayue Consulting Company in Beijing.

Wasted investment is estimated at 20 percent, Jin said.

Construction of underground subway lines costs 500-700 million yuan per kilometer; elevated subway cost 100-250 million; and light rail costs 50-100 million.

Operational efficiency of the lines is far from satisfactory. The Beijing municipal government invests 10 billion yuan from its budget each year to

build new lines and another 2 billion to subsidize the operation of existing lines, said Wu Lishun, manager of financing and planning from Beijing Investment.

By 2015, operational losses in Beijing will total 4.3 billion without factoring in depreciation and management costs. Total losses will reach 17 billion, equivalent to the construction of a new line.

The subway line in Shenzhen is in a similar predicament.

It has accumulated losses of more than 1 billion yuan since it went into operation earlier this decade. Total losses between now and 2016 – including depreciation of the equipment and facilities and interest paid on loans – are expected to reach 22 billion yuan.

"The problem in Shenzhen is that it has not formed a complete

network of subway lines. It will be a common problem in most of the second-tier cities," Jin said. In these cities, it could be even more serious.

"The problems are in the structure of the corporations constructing and operating the lines," said Wang Hao, former deputy director of Beijing's State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration.

Subway operators are state-oriented rather than market-oriented. They have no interest or enthusiasm for efficiency or repaying their government loans.

Another problem is the aggressive attitude by which governments, both central and local, financed these projects. Neither level requested concrete supervision of the projects and detailed repayment schedules when issuing the huge loans, he said.

Worm composts in need of sorting regulations

By Liang Meilan

After failed trials in 2001 and 2009, worm composting is back in home trials.

On August 11, three neighborhoods in Dongs, Dongcheng District, began a one-month trial with improved equipment in preparation for a wider promotion of the technology in 50 families. Experts said strict waste sorting is vital to the widespread of the technology.

Proposed by the Global Village of Beijing Environment Education Center (GVB), the trial is conducted at GVB's office, a rooftop in the Dongs Residents' Committee office building and at the home of resident Li Yulan.

The past two trials failed due to worm death.

"This time, the experiment is being conducted both indoors and outdoors to discern the most favorable ventilation and humidity environment for raising the worms," said Hou Fei, GVB initiator of the trial project.

Unlike prior trials, the new containers used will be coded plastic boxes drilled with holes to ensure ample oxygen.

"To ensure a good survival

rate, we also invited an earthworm expert from China Agricultural University, Sun Zhenjun, to design and direct the trial," Hou said.

"If the trial is a success, we hope the method can be promoted in more communities," Hou said, adding that its promotion may rely on the municipal government and experts.

Dealing with organic waste is one of the top challenges facing Beijing's city management. While the government has already established biodegradation stations for collected organic waste, it hopes to find a feasible, resident-driven method to address the issue.

Deng Jun, deputy director general of the Committee of Beijing Municipality and City Appearance, welcomed the promotion as innovative.

"But before it can become widespread in the city, it will have to be made more feasible and less costly. The current waste-sorting reality should also be taken into consideration to create a sustainable refuse disposal system," he said.

Feng Jianguo, a researcher

at the Beijing Municipal Research Center for Rural Economy, agreed.

"Improper waste sorting may lead to the mixing of hazardous substances into organic waste, which will turn the worm-waste fertilizer into something that may one day be harmful to humans," he said.

Looking back to the 2009 trial, which lasted three months in 20 families, "it appears that we were too imprudent," said Han Baisheng, team leader of the China Community Volunteer who carried out the 2009 trial.

"Problems with the techniques and poor research caused the failure. The biggest problem was poor air permeability of the containers, which caused everything to turn rancid and attract parasitic insects that were fatal to the red wiggler worms," he said.

Improper care of the worms was another cause. "Some families put the containers on the balcony where the worms drowned and died," he said.

The trial is now in its 16th day. "Everything looks normal," said Li, hostess of the experiment family.

"The worms in the two boxes have already grown from 1 inch to 3 inches long in such a short time. Sweet food waste, like watermelons, is their favorites. I don't think it's such a burden. You only need only to feed them every three days. When there is rain, the first thing I do is cover the boxes with plastic cloth to prevent the worms from drowning," she said.

"To ensure a healthy 'diet' for the worms, my family is carefully sorting the waste to prevent the worms from being exposed to detrimental bacteria," she said.

"But some of my neighbors don't like it. They are afraid that improper breeding of the worms will draw flies and mosquitoes," she said.

Though relatively new in China, worm composting has long been used in the US and Japan. "Worm composting boxes are commonly seen in Japanese families," said Feng, the researcher.

Ideally, 1 kilogram of organic food waste can be decomposed by an equal weight of earthworms into a half-kilogram of waste. This waste can be used as rich, dark soil for plants.

FESCO to help settle labor disputes

By Zhao Hongyi

FESCO, the Foreign Enterprises Service Company set up by the People's Disputes Settlement Panel of Foreign Enterprises, said over the weekend that it will provide legal services and help to settle increasing labor disputes and conflicts among its Beijing members.

The new agency will provide arbitration, persuasion and legal help to member enterprises and their employees whenever they have labor disputes. The outcome of these proceedings would be legally valid, according to Hao Jie, FESCO's business supervisor.

"Due to different cultural backgrounds and legal systems, foreign investors used to misunderstand Chinese laws and regulations about protecting employees," Xiao Linguang, chairman of the workers' union of FESCO, said at the press conference, seeking to explain the rising number of disputes.

Founded in 1979, FESCO provides human resources, legal advice and consultancy to 200,000 foreign enterprises in Beijing. It has participated in solving labor disputes for three decades.

"We strongly suggest our members bring their disputes to us for settlement before going to arbitration and the courts," Hao said. "It can greatly reduce the strain on the country's social resources."

There are as many as 82 million workers working in 5 million foreign-invested enterprises and companies in the country, according to the China Association of Enterprises with Foreign Investment (CAFEL), an agency under the Ministry of Commerce.

Pressure, workloads, low pay, conflicts, sexual harassment, layoffs and welfare have been at the center of many recent labor disputes.

In the notorious example of Foxconn, the world's largest IT manufacturer from Taiwan, 12 young employees committed suicide at Foxconn's Shenzhen dormitory.

Foxconn has three dorm compounds on the Chinese mainland. Each has 400,000 to 600,000 young employees. The reasons behind the deaths are complicated, and seem to be a combination of love, pressure, low pay and overwork.

Since the deaths, Foxconn withdrew from Shenzhen and opened a new 300,000-worker dorm in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, hoping to ease pressure and escape media attention.

The government supports the creation of dispute-settling panels inside each enterprise and industry. In 2006, a South Korean shoe-maker in Dalian set up the first intra-company arbitration panel.

"The best move is to create a union in each company," Tang Guoxiong, a lawyer at the Guangzhou-based Guorong Lawyer Office, said. "So then, the first step would be to allow unions."

Tourists to see more of Forbidden City

By Chu Meng

The top Beijing tourist destination, the Forbidden City, will begin its largest renovation yet on September 1. When the five-year overhaul is completed, 40 percent more of its total area will be open to the public, Shan Jixiang, chief of State Bureau of Cultural Relics, said last Friday.

Shan said that at present, only 30 percent of the Forbidden City's total area is opened to visitors, and less than one-fourth of its 9,900 rooms have been restored for tourism.

"Because of our limited restoration ability and less developed techniques for salvaging cultural relics early last century, only the area along the axis of the Forbidden City was renovated and opened. Most of the west and east areas are still closed to the public," Shan said.

The years of abandonment have severely damaged many of the other buildings. "It has been a great loss for both the relics themselves and for the public. People should have a chance to appreciate one of the nation's most brilliant sites of cultural heritage," he said.

Li Yongge, director of the ancient building section of the Palace Museum, said most of the ancient craft techniques required to repair the rest of the Forbidden City were neither discovered nor mastered until fairly recently.

The admission fee is expected



The second phase of the Forbidden City repair project begins next week.

CFP Photo

to remain the same, which means tourists will eventually be able to visit 40 percent more of the Forbidden City for the same price.

Shan said the capacity of the Forbidden City is 30,000 visitors per day, but that the number of visitors always far exceeds that capacity. On some days,

the number of tourists reaches 130,000.

That many visitors being locked into one centralized exhibition area has put a strain on the historical site. The expansion will help to spread out their visits, reducing damage to the Forbidden City.

The project is part of a 20-year general overhaul that started in October 17, 2002 and will finish by 2020.

The first stage of the repair project was completed ahead of the 2008 Olympic Games. The effort is currently in its second stage.

SOS orphan village continues to hemorrhage moms

By Li Zhixin

Beijing SOS Children's Village put out the word last Monday that it is looking for new moms.

The advertisement, posted on the Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau's homepage, marks the seventh time the village has searched for new workers since opening one year ago.

Village organizers initially planned to recruit 15 moms and six assistants when it opened, but it has yet to retain that many eligible parents.

Moms moving on

Fan Pufang (pseudonym), 34, pledged to bring up a generation of children in the village when she joined the staff, but she will be leaving next month.

She was one of the first moms hired by the village when it opened last July.

Having grown up in a single-parent family, Fan said she knows the important role of a mother in the life of a child. Her own experiences growing up led her to apply enthusiastically to the first recruitment drive.

As a mom, Fan hoped to make a difference in the children's lives.

Her work in the village was to take care of daily life, develop recipes that met the children's nutritional requirements, record the cost of each child's living and educate the children according to their needs.

Her colleagues said Fan loved children very much and was a model of professionalism and responsibility. But as more orphans were sent to the village, her workload was bumped from raising two children to five.

Three months ago was the first time she thought about quitting. As she is still single, her elderly mother has been pushing her to get married. However, SOS prevents its moms from marrying while under contract.

"I don't want to abandon these children, but I have to look after my mother and consider my own future. I am not that young anymore," she said.

These same concerns have driven many of Fan's colleagues to quit.

Four moms left the village during the last year to marry or capitulate to their family's demands that they leave the village.

"Each new mom loves her job and intends to stick with it, but it can be hard to resist pressure from parents and relatives who can't understand why they have to stay single. Their relatives criticize them for having physical or psychological problems," said Jin Linde, head of the village.

"So we can totally understand our employees. If they choose to leave, we will respect their decision," he said. "We have grown used to it."



Moms and assistants who marry or have a child have to terminate immediately their work at the village..

Zhuixing/CFP Photo

Strict rules a turn-off

Jin said he hoped Fan could stay and work longer, as her leaving will aggravate the already extreme shortage of moms in the village.

"[I hope she can stay] not only because Fan is a responsible and tender mom, but because it is really hard to recruit such qualified moms and assistants," he said.

Although the village received more than 100 resumes during each recruitment period, fewer than 20 applicants showed up to each interview. The exams and psychological tests eliminated most of the remaining applicants.

"We have had seven recruitment drives during the last year, but most applicants are put off by our strict requirements," he said.

Work as a mom or assistant is hard and requires employees to be together with the children all year around, except during the 60-day yearly vacation, he said. Children with mental handicaps can require even more time and attention.

But the number one thing preventing the hiring of new moms and causing the loss of current ones is a rule that all moms and assistants must be single and without a child. Moms and assistants who marry or have a child are terminated immediately.

The rule is intended to ensure that moms and assistants devote all their energy and love to the orphans to give them a real family experience. But in real life, this rule is simply incompatible with human nature," he said.

Although the village wants to change the rule, it can't.

Because Beijing SOS Children's Village is part of an international cooperation project with the Austria-based SOS Children International, it must abide by the rules and regulations of its headquarters.

Outdated regulations

The village has 15 two-story buildings, each with one family. The village supports the children until they finish their compulsory education.

Students admitted to college are eligible for continued support. Those who don't make the cut will be enrolled in a trade school to learn how to make a living on their own.

Unlike welfare homes which raise orphans as a group, the children's village aims to more closely emulate the experience of a home life.

Children's village has developed rapidly in the two decades since the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs reached a cooperative agreement with SOS Children International in 1984. There are 10 SOS children's villages in China today.

But the mom shortage may ensure there is no future expansion.

Beijing SOS Children's Village was designed with a capacity for 120, but it only has enough moms for 30. "There are supposed to be another 50 orphans sent here by the end of the year, but I don't know if we'll be able to recruit enough moms," Jin said.

Previously, the village was open to orphans born in Beijing. Now it is also



Moms must live with the children all the time, except during the 60-day yearly vacation.

open to the surrounding provinces since most Beijing orphans are raised by their surviving relatives.

Beijing SOS Children's Village is not the only one having problems with recruitment: at a joint meeting of all 10 SOS Chil-

dren's villages several months ago, every village head reported the same problem.

The 10 villages have filed a joint request with the Association of China's SOS Children Villages to waive the rule as soon as possible.

"The constitution of SOS Children International is more than 60 years old, so some of its rules really don't fit the reality of life in modern society," said Bai Yihua, the chairman of the Association of China's SOS International Villages.

"It is unreasonable to require moms to stay single forever. This could cause them to develop their own mental problems that would affect the orphans' growth," Bai said. "This difficulty in recruiting moms is a problem shared by every village around the world," he said.

One idea would be to expand the range of potential candidates to include 40- to 50-year-old women. Those who have already married and had children of their own may be more experienced and capable of raising the orphans, Bai said.

SOS Children International is considering reforming its rules. The Chinese association of SOS villages hopes to present its case along with data from all 10 villages before reforms are finalized.



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Loosened yuan bond market

McDonald's sets benchmark for China with yuan bond sale

McDonald's Corp's yuan bond sale, the first by a foreign company in Hong Kong, may pave the way for a new global debt market as China seeks to capitalize on its status as the engine of the world's economic recovery.

McDonald's, which opened its first 1,000 restaurants faster in China than in any other country outside the US, sold 200 million yuan of 3 percent notes due in September 2013. Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart Stores, the world's largest retailer, said in March it was considering selling bonds in yuan.

As the fastest-growing major economy, China changed its rules in February to let foreign companies issue yuan-denominated bonds through Hong Kong to strengthen its position as a financial center and promote the Chinese currency for global commerce.

Yuan bonds issued by Chinese companies have returned 6 percent this year, their best performance since 2005, according to a Bank of America Merrill Lynch index tracking 1.38 trillion yuan of debt.

"This is going to become a popular trend," said Donald Straszheim, a Los Angeles-based senior managing director and head of China research at International Strategy & Investment Group. "There are hundreds of global companies wanting to do more business in China and they will want to be involved in the country's evolving credit market."

Big Bang

Oak Brook, Illinois-based McDonald's issue, the first by a nonfinancial company from outside China and Hong Kong, follows a 1.38 billion yuan deal by Gordon Wu's Hopewell Highway Infrastructure. Bank of East Asia and HSBC's China unit became the first non-Chinese banks to sell yuan bonds in 2009, Bloomberg data show.

China is on the cusp of a "big bang" of reforms that will give foreign investors greater access to capital markets, Nomura Holdings analysts led by Hong Kong-based Sean Darby wrote in a report on August 18.

Elsewhere in credit markets, a gauge of US corporate credit risk rose to the highest in a month after data yesterday spurred concern the economic rebound may be flagging. The Markit CDX North America Investment Grade Index Series 14, which investors use to hedge against losses on corporate debt or to speculate on credit worthiness, climbed 1.7 basis points to a mid-price of 110.4 basis points as of 12:01 p.m. in New York, according to

Markit Group.

Growth in China

"This gives us access to new funding to support growth in China," said Lisa Howard, a spokeswoman for the restaurant chain. "We are very confident in the Chinese market and have a strong plan to grow our business in China." Fitch Ratings gave the 200 million yuan debt a Grade A ranking, its sixth-highest investment grade.

Money raised will provide working capital for expansion in China, where the company will open as many as 175 restaurants this year, according to the statement.

"Consumer demand is strong in that part of the world, and there's opportunity to open up more stores in some of the more inland-type cities. It seems like a good move on McDonald's part," said Nicholas Reitenbach, New York-based senior international portfolio manager at Wilkinson O'Grady, which has about \$1.8 billion (12.2 billion yuan) in assets.

Currency speculation

A market in yuan-denominated debt issued by foreign companies would give investors the chance to speculate on China's currency, which economists expect to strengthen, said Georg Grodzki, head of credit research at Legal & General Investment Management.

"For many investors, this type of product would be more appealing and suitable than Chinese corporate credit risk and almost allows a pure currency play with the benefit of some extra yield," said London-based Grodzki, who helps oversee \$468 billion of investments.

"Liquidity in corporate yuan debt remains to be tested and currency convertibility may cause issues. Investors should be mindful of such risks and prepare a plan B."

China is seeking to broaden use of the yuan, a move that began with approving the currency to settle cross-border trade with Hong Kong in June 2009.

The central banks of China and Hong Kong signed agreements on July 19 to ease restrictions on yuan transfers between banks and companies in the city, and also agreed the ex-colony would have no restrictions on yuan deposit holders transferring cash to buy wealth-management products.

(Agencies)



McDonald's has expanded faster in China than anywhere outside the US. IC Photo

Market watch

Citigroup, HSBC and CIMB seek China bond trading license

Citigroup, HSBC and CIMB Group plan to apply to invest in yuan bonds following the People's Bank of China's decision to open its interbank debt market.

Andrew Au, the Shanghai-based chief executive officer of Citigroup's Chinese unit, said the bank is working on the documents required for units outside China to invest in the market. HSBC is studying application procedures, it said.

Lee Kok Kwan, deputy chief executive of Kuala Lumpur-based CIMB, Malaysia's second-largest banking group, said his company intends to apply. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority said it is investigating details of the program.

Overseas demand for the yuan has grown since China ended the yuan's two-year dollar peg on June 19, giving the currency room to appreciate. The PBOC said on August 17 it would let overseas financial institutions invest yuan

holdings in the nation's interbank bond market to promote greater use of the yuan in global trade and finance.

"There will be a level of interest on the part of central banks and foreign participants," Au said in a phone interview yesterday. "China is already the world's second-largest economy based on government data in the second quarter. It would be logical for a lot of international players to be interested."

The People's Bank of China's didn't reply to a fax from Bloomberg seeking more details on the licensing procedures and the banks that have submitted applications.

Citigroup and Credit Agricole CIB said on August 18 that China opening up its bond market to foreign banks would enhance the currency's potential as a foreign-exchange reserve asset.

(Agencies)

Company proposes 3D bus to beat jams

By Huang Daoheng

To beat increasing traffic congestion and carbon emissions, a Shenzhen company is putting forward a new solution: a vehicle that runs above all others.

Called a "straddling bus," the futuristic vehicle is extra wide and tall and takes up no road space, as its passenger compartment allows cars to pass underneath, its developer Shenzhen Huashi Future Parking Equipment said.

The bus spans two traffic lanes and runs on solar and electric power generated by panels on its roof. It travels at an average speed of 40 kilometers per hour.

The bus would be green, unaffected by congestion and requires far less to build than a light rail or subway system.

Song Youzhou, president of Huashi and owner of the super-bus' patent, said the project is expected to reduce traffic jams by 25 to 30 percent on major roads. Song, who called the bus the "3D Express," said the idea came to him when he was stuck in a traffic jam last year.

"Why isn't there a vehicle on the roads driving over the others? There is so much space above us," Song said.

Song's 3D Express debuted at the Beijing International High-Tech Expo in May and gained public attention. Though the project still has a few technical problems to overcome, Song said he received many inquiries from transport officials in several countries.

Beijing will be the first city to test the project. Mentougou District said it plans to start building a 9-kilometer route this year.

"The design is in line with our concept of green transportation and our vision of the future," said an official surnamed Zhang in the district. "Though we are still waiting on approval from the municipal government, we hope to start construction and operation as soon as possible."

Zhang said a 100-kilometer route will be put in place across the city if the test is successful.

Huashi said the cost of construction is about 50 million yuan for a 25-mile network. The vehicles will be built by the China South Locomotive and Rolling Stock.

Not everyone is convinced the project is operationally and commercially viable. "The notion of cars proceeding underneath a moving bus sounds crazy. The success of the project is, in large part, dependent on the willingness of drivers to actually drive under the bus," said Wang Jin, an editor at Auto magazine.

"The one thing you can't control is other drivers on the road, and they are the biggest risk," he said.



Rendering of the bus on the road.

Buffet's lesson in charity for China

Can Buffet and Gates persuade China's rich to give back?

By Huang Daohen

While China's billionaires are busy investing their money to pave the way for their companies to become multinationals, American billionaires Warren Buffett and Bill Gates have announced that they will come to China next month to ask the country's rich to donate at least half of their wealth, according to AFP.

Without a backdrop of philanthropist heritage in China, many doubt that Buffett and Gates' trip for a more charitable China will have a positive effect.



Warren Buffett (left) and Bill Gates are due in China to press the wealthy to donate more.
Daniel Glushter/CFP Photo

The move comes after the release of a list of 40 rich donors who pledged to give more than half of their fortune to charity. In June, Buffett and Gates launched a project called "The Giving Pledge," calling the wealthiest individuals and families in the US to give away the majority of their wealth.

Wealthy individuals – including CNN founder Ted Turner and New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg – have signed the pledge, AFP said.

In a press briefing earlier this month, Buffett said he will meet with a large group of wealthy Chinese people. "That's just to

explain it to people in those countries and maybe give a little bit of our experience. And if they wish to take what we think is a good idea and run with it, we'll be cheering," AFP quoted Buffett as saying.

According to *Forbes* magazine, China has the second highest number of billionaires in the world, after the US. This year's list included 117 Chinese, with 64 from mainland, 25 from Hong Kong and 18 from Taiwan.

However, due to cultural differences between China and the US, many doubt the two Americans will persuade anyone.

pointed. Of course their visit will be warmly received from the country's billionaires, because a get-together party with celebrities like Buffett and Gates could be potentially good for one's image or business. But a pledge at a party is always difficult to implement, and in the end the pledges may turn out to be nothing but empty words. This campaign would have a dismal effect.

– Lillian, HP manager

Modest Chinese wealthy

The charity trip is good, but I'm worried Buffett and Gates will find it really hard to locate the truly wealthy in China. Although the lists by *Hurun* and *Fortune* offer some clues, most wealthy people remain anonymous because in China there is a prevalent feeling of hatred for the wealthy, which means the rich need to keep a low profile in order to avoid unwanted attention.

Besides, there are some who made their wealth by abusing their power. They won't meet Buffett and Gates, of course, or they would risk landing in jail before they can give anything away.

– Shi Shusi,

senior editor of *Worker's Daily*

Comment

New status for wealthy

In China and across the world, being wealthy is about how many properties or cars one has. But as dozens of American billionaires pledge to give away their wealth, following Buffett's lead, more people will engage in philanthropy and it will become a trend.

Philanthropy will be the new status symbol for the rich. In the future, giving money away will be something of real importance to the rich.

– James Ackerman, accountant

Company comes first

It will be difficult to ask Chinese entrepreneurs to donate. China's economy is still in its early development stages and many private companies, owned by wealthy Chinese, are still at the low end of the global production chain. You cannot expect these rich entrepreneurs to give away their money because they need to keep the funds and reinvest them in their business.

To most wealthy businessmen, expanding their companies always comes before charities.

– Huang Shenghe, businessman

Dismal effect

Buffett and Gates may be disap-

The third eye Philanthropy in China

When Jeff Bass arrived in Beijing as a visiting scholar three years ago, he wanted to find a charity to get involved with. But he found the task exceedingly difficult, and not just because he was an American who barely spoke Chinese at that time.

During his first winter here, Bass, who specializes in Chinese culture and history, found a way to donate. He kept small bills and change and gave them to street beggars. "They had a beautiful smile and were always gracious for the change I put in their tin," he said.

But Bass noticed he was the only one giving. Most people just walked past or ignored the street beggars as if they didn't exist.

Many say they don't give anything to anyone because there are just too many street beggars, including some who are fake.

But looking deeper, Bass said there are inherent problems within China's charitable industry.

First, there is no tradition of philanthropy in Chinese culture.

Second, the country is engaged in an economic transition. People are on the quest for bigger and better materialistic things and ignore any search for deeper meaning in life.

"Wealthy Chinese know just the most primitive and practical way of achieving self-worth," Bass said.

And third, China lacks a government support system for establishing charities. There are loopholes in some commercial and economic laws to support charities, but there are very few foundations or non-profit social organizations to independently operate their way.

Currently, if you want to operate charities in the country, you have to first find an organization that is approved by the government, then do the charities through them.

"In China, the concept is far from being realized," Bass said.

Award kept for controversial 'corpse photo'

By Chu Meng

The controversial news photo "Holding onto a Corpse and Demanding Money," which won China's top news photography prize last week, has been deemed authentic by authorities despite claims to the contrary.

The photo, taken by Zhang Yi, shows a boatman holding a rope connected to the body of a drowned university student, who remains in the water. The caption originally claimed the boatman, Wang Shouhai, demanded 36,000 yuan in payment for bringing the body to shore.

The body belonged to one of the three college students in Jingzhou, Hubei Province who drowned while trying to save two children who had fallen into the Yangtze River on October 24, 2009.

The image attracted nationwide attention when it appeared in the Shanxi-based *China Business Review*, and Wang suffered beatings because of it. But when the picture was awarded the silver medal at the 23rd National Photographic Art Exhibition on August 5, Yangtze University press director Li Yuquan said the photographer fabricated the photo caption and misled the public.

Li wrote on his blog that Wang was actually gesturing to people on the bank to help him pull out the corpse.

Zhang, 25, who has since resigned from his newspaper, stands by his picture. On August 18, Zhang won the Golden Lens Award – China's top prize for photojournalists – and this past Monday the Golden Lens Award organizing committee confirmed the photo's accuracy.

Comment

Media is no longer convincing

What this incident shows is that the public tends to not believe the media. From the "paper baozi" story on Beijing TV in 2007 to the award-winning photo-shopped images of South China tigers in 2008, I think these incidents have ruined the public's confidence in the media.

– Werry Gui,

news analyst on *Hexun.com*

Challenge for media ethics

For quite a long time people believed that photos always depicted the truth. But currently, dishonesty is a big problem for Chinese journalists and photographers; they should work under principles of uncovering truth rather than earning money. Media ethics have been questioned more and more by the public because journalists are increasingly working for money.

The latest incident of Zhang's photo tells us that media ethics are deteriorating as we speak.

– Xiao Rui, senior editor of *China's Security and Law* magazine

Spotlight hurts the victims

It is sad that the fishermen were beaten as a result of this dispute. Also, photos like this should stop winning awards because the attention it attracts reopens the wounds of the victims' families. [The students] who died were heroes. They should not be placed under the spotlight for others to judge. It is not respectful to them specifically, and shows no dignity to the dead in general.

– Alessandro Vecchi, Italian photographer working in Beijing

On the tracks of giant pandas

By Wang Yu

When Nigel Marven, one of the most reputable British wildlife presenters and TV producers, arrived at Chengdu, Sichuan Province last April, he was not sure he would find wild giant pandas to film.

Due to their elusive nature – Marven and his colleagues sometimes couldn't see the pandas even when they could hear them clearly chewing bamboo – it was a task that required stealth and patience.

That was the most difficult part of Marven's latest 10-million-yuan project: if the pandas never show, there's nothing to film. There was another added pressure: Marven was the first Western specialist allowed to film pandas in Chengdu's natural reserves. He was also officially Chengdu's "panda ambassador," an honor previously awarded to just one man: China's biggest star in Hollywood, Jackie Chan.

"In the West, they asked me, Why are you going to China to film wildlife? There are 1.3 billion people and no animals left," Marven said.

"But it turned out that they were totally wrong, as I've seen so many animals here, such as the gold monkey and giant salamander – the biggest ones in the world at nearly two meters long – and I filmed them," he said. "The series will be broadcast in about 50 countries to show how China has so many beautiful natural places that people can visit."

Cooperating with the Chinese documentary studio Vision, this was Marven's first time making a film in China since he started his career 20 years ago.

Marven, 49, studied botany at Bristol University until the age of 22, when he said he realized he wasn't good enough at math to become a scientist. He left to begin his career as a wildlife documentary researcher at the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol.

In 1998, Marven made his first wildlife film, *Giants*, in which he swam with a great white shark without the protection of a cage. Soon he was widely known for his unorthodox, spontaneous and daring style of presenting wildlife documentaries as well as for including factual knowledge.

Marven's fascination with pandas began when, as a child, he read a book about the Great Wall that his father gave him. On the first page was a panda named Chichi,



Nigel Marven was the first Westerner allowed to enter Panda Breeding and Research Center in Chengdu.

Photos provided by Nigel Marven



Marven and his team will come to China again for his next wildlife program.

the star attraction at London Zoo and the panda that inspired Sir Peter Scott's logo for the World Wildlife Fund.

Marven's father took him to the zoo to see Chichi, and the young Marven was hooked.

During the shooting, Marven ate as much as he could in one sitting and then worked the following days without much food. With a team of expert trackers and heavy equipment, Marven took care to track these bamboo-eating bears, which move swiftly and can actually be quite dangerous.

After 12 days, Marven's team hit a lucky break when they found themselves within 10 yards of a mother panda nursing her cub while leaning against a tree. Marven believes he is the first person to ever film a wild panda from so close.

"The Chinese trackers were so excited. In the banquet

that night, we kept toasting to celebrate," Marven said. "The banquet was filmed, and it was the first time that I've gotten drunk on television."

In the film, he also records stories about the Panda Breeding and Research Center in Chengdu, including how researchers saved the pandas after the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. Marven also walks through Xi'an's Terracotta Army in the film.

"There are 6,000 terracotta warriors left and only 2,100 giant pandas," Marven said. "We make the point in the film that losing all the world's giant pandas would be like smashing all the remaining terracotta warriors."

The series will be broadcast on CCTV, CETV and BBC Channel 5 in autumn. Marven and his team will move on to Hainan in October for his next project involving China's wildlife.

Romantic designer up in the air

By Chu Meng

China World Trade Center Tower 3, Beijing's tallest business center, opened last week. The four restaurants and bars on the 80th floor are the city's highest dining places, and their interior designs are the result of the vision of one man: artistic director Adam Tihany.

Tihany is a preeminent designer whose work includes many Michelin-starred restaurants. Born in the Romanian region of Transylvania in 1948 and raised in Israel, he earned an architectural degree from Milan, Italy. After apprenticing in design firms throughout Europe, he moved to New York City when he was 28 to become design director of the firm Unigram.

"Think of me not as a designer, but as a custom tailor or as a cultural portrait artist," he said. "When I accept a new case, the first thing I do is have an in-depth look at the city the restaurant is located in and live in small and creative hotels, thick with authentic local traditional cultural elements."

Tihany designed the interiors of Grill 79, The Lounge, Atmosphere, Chairman's Room and The Peak, which are all on the top of Tower 3, using features that subtly recall traditional Chinese symbolism and the duality of "yin" and "yang."

To Tihany, yin and yang convey the concept of heaven and earth, balance and harmony, prevalent in Chinese culture such as traditional Chinese medicine, taijiquan and qigong. "Yin-yang was also one of the most important concerns when ancient Chinese people built their homes," he said, adding, "My gray mustache combines black and white, which also abide by yin-yang theory."

The 80th floor's decor is yin – cool, ethereal, heavenly and feminine. Tihany is particularly masterful when playing up the prominence of ceiling features to reflect a heavenly ambience. In The Lounge, he uses custom glass light spheres that appear suspended in mid-air, a virtual sky inside the hotel.

The 79th floor is characteristically yang – warmer, with earthy colors that evoke masculinity. Rows of dangling crystals surround a sleek glass-enclosed lift that carries guests between the top floors.

"Every day I pray to be like design heavyweights like Philippe Stark or Zaha Hadid," Tihany said. "If there is one style that you do well and you can do it everywhere, that is wonderful. But in order for us to get the best results for our clients, we have to do something different every time."

"The easiest way is to be site specific and do things that cannot be done in London or New York or Paris or anywhere else – to fuse unique local cultural background into the design. We are not Gucci. We are more like Brioni."

Tihany also designed the "tallest restaurant in the world" on the 123rd floor of the Burj Dubai, the tallest building in the world. However, he said that is not comparable with his work in Beijing.

"Well, that restaurant is 40 floors higher," he said. "But it is weird shooting up 125 floors in 36 seconds and what do you see? Nothing. There is no view. It's all desert. At night it is completely dark. I suppose if you are drunk enough, you can see everything. You will be seeing spaceships. But in Beijing, you can see Chang'an Avenue and even the Forbidden City."

China, the Philippines mourn hostage crisis victims

Leaders of China and the Philippines have expressed deep sorrow over the hostage crisis that ended in the deaths of nine tourists from Hong Kong.

A working team sent by the Chinese government is now in Manila to deal with the aftermath.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao expressed their condolences on Tuesday to the families of the Hong Kong tourists killed during Monday's hostage crisis in the Philippines.

In a joint letter to Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, chief executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), Hu and Wen expressed their deep sorrow for the families of those killed and consolation for the injured.

"We are in grave shock and grief on hearing that eight Hong Kong compatriots fell and many others were injured in the Manila hostage incident," the letter said. One of the injured later died in the hospital.

"We hereby express our grave condolences and our deep sympathy to the families of the Hong Kong compatriots, and we hope the injured will recover soon," the letter said.



Buddhist monks pray after a hostage stand-off that resulted in the death of nine hostages and the gunman on August 24 in Manila. CFP Photo

Philippine President Benigno Aquino III has declared August 25 a day of national mourning for the victims of the hostage crisis.

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, during a telephone conversation with his Phil-

ippine counterpart Alberto Romulo, said the Chinese government was shocked about the incident, deplored the slaying of the Hong Kong tourists and strongly condemned brutality against innocent tourists.

The Chinese government demanded the Philippine government launch a thorough investigation into the incident and inform the Chinese side of related details as soon as possible, he said.

(Xinhua)

Philippine embassy in Beijing lowers flag to half-mast

By Chu Meng

The Philippine embassy in Beijing lowered its flag to half-mast on Wednesday to show sympathy for the deaths of nine Hong Kong tourists in Monday's hostage crisis.

According to an announcement issued on the official website of the Philippine Embassy of China, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III issued a proclamation on Tuesday ordering all government agencies, including the country's embassies and consulates abroad, to lower the Philippine flag to half-mast.

"These deaths are a great loss to the people of Hong Kong and the Philippines, and [we] call for the most

solemn commemoration and respect at a time of grief for our two people," the proclamation said.

China's National Tourism Administration (NTA) issued a caution on its website to Chinese tourists traveling to the Philippines. For those already in the Philippines, the NTA reminded them to take note of security conditions and strengthen their personal protective measures and suggested Chinese tourists go to the local police or contact the Chinese embassy in case of emergencies.

"Our tourism visa policy for China's tourists has not changed," a visa official from the Philippine Embassy in Beijing said on Wednesday

afternoon. "We see no need for Chinese tourists to cancel or postpone travel plans to the Philippines during the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day Holiday."

"There hasn't been many cancellations or postponements from our registered tourists. But we've had more callers question the tourism environment and security situation in the Philippines," said Zhen Hongjuan, manager of the outbound tourism department at China International Travel Service.

Zhen said security is a travel agency's top concern. Since no other potential security hazards in other major Philippine cities were reported, registration to the Philippines

tour remained open.

However, some citizens have had second thoughts about going to the Philippines. Bao Lei, a Beijing citizen who is planning a National Day trip with his family, just crossed out the Philippines from her list.

"I decided I want to travel to Taiwan next month," she said. "I just don't want to be in the Philippines during this emotional time."

The Chinese government demanded a thorough investigation on how the hostage crisis was handled and urged the Philippine government to take concrete measures to ensure the safety and security of Chinese citizens in the Philippines.

Nepali ambassador will lead walk into birthplace of Sakyamuni

By Li Zhixin

Nepali ambassador Tanka Prasad Karki announced at a news conference Monday that he will participate in a walk to Lumbini, the birthplace of Sakyamuni, from Lhasa, Tibet, during the first International Walking Around the Himalayas Day in October.

To celebrate the 55th anniversary of China-Nepal diplo-

matic relations, Nepal's embassy, the Nepali Tourism Administration, China Volkssport Association (CVA) and Tibet's Tourism Bureau will jointly hold the walk from September 26 to October 8.

The walk will start at Lhasa's Potala Palace near Yangdork Lake and the north face of Mt. Qomolangma. The team plans to reach Zhangmu Port on the China-

Nepal border on October 3. The ambassador will join the team at Katmandu and lead the participants through Lukla, Phakding, Namche Bazaar and Tyangboche before arriving at Lumbini on October 8. The team will return to China three days later.

During the trip, participants will get to appreciate and experience the ethnic customs of

Chinese Tibetans and Nepalese Sherpas. "This will be the first walking diplomacy between the two countries. I believe the event will strengthen the countries' rapport and convey a message of peace to the world," Karki said.

Those who are interested in the event can enroll at chinawalking.net.cn or through VCA at 8489 6319.

Swiss culture festival focuses on China

By Han Manman

Chinese art and culture will be highlighted at this year's Switzerland culture festival starting September 16, according to the Swiss embassy.

The three-month festival "Culturescapes" aims to provide a panorama of China by featuring events such as live music, art exhibitions, film screenings and literature readings, said Terence Billeter, counselor of the Swiss embassy's culture and media department.

Billeter said the festival includes 300 events and will be carried out in 18 cities in Switzerland and nearby countries Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein.

He said the festival, with an overarching theme of "traditional and modern," will be divided into four parts: seeking roots, rethinking history, rebirth and across borders.

Xiang Xiaowei, assistant director-general of the Ministry of Culture said China will bring Yueju Opera's *The Butterfly Lovers* and Kunqu Opera's *The Peony Pavilion* to Switzerland.

Xiang said they didn't select Peking Opera because Peking Opera has already enjoyed worldwide success, and the ministry wanted to promote some other prestigious but perhaps lesser-known opera troupes.

Xiang said they chose *The Butterfly Lovers* because it has historical significance. In April 1954, premier Zhou Enlai led a delegation to attend an international conference in Geneva, Switzerland - the first time New China participated in a major international conference.

During the Geneva Conference, the film version of *The Butterfly Lovers* was shown and was very popular. It helped many Westerners understand Chinese culture and how Chinese people thought.

Switzerland was one of the first Western countries to recognize the People's Republic of China when it did so on January 17, 1950. This year marks the 60th anniversary of that occasion.

"Sixty years ago, in the context of the Cold War, this decision was bold and even visionary," Billeter said, adding that some events at this year's festival will commemorate this important anniversary.

Formal diplomatic relations were established on September 14th of the same year.

"Since then, and especially since the beginning of the reform and opening policy in China, bilateral relations between the two countries have intensified and diversified," he said.

Culturescapes has become an important event on the Swiss cultural calendar ever since its first edition, highlighting the country Georgia, in 2003. The annual event reflects the variety and distinctiveness of heterogeneous cultural landscapes and provides a panorama of their art and cultural scenes.

The festival will focus on Israel next year.

International students explore education innovations

By Liang Meilan

A handful of foreign university students spent the final days of their summer vacation in the classroom in Beijing. Students from South Asia, Europe, North America and South America joined local counterparts to attend a weeklong workshop at Peking University that discussed how to incorporate advanced technologies into education reform.

"An estimated 150 million students worldwide receive improper education in a poor educational environment, and the number is expected to double in the next 15 years. It is a pressing task for every country to ensure that its young people have a sound and sustainable education system," said Xu Luping, co-founder of Paris-based World-wide Interaction for Science, Education and Research in Universities (Wiser-U), the event organizer.

Xu said the help from students is indispensable in solving the problem, and that is why they organized the summer workshop. "We offer this platform to bring together young pioneers and experts to share their unconventional ideas on technologies that can be used for education in the future," he said.

The 19 participating teams were composed of students who have been conducting their own research on how to introduce teaching innovations. The group of experts who advised the students consisted of 11 well-known education "innovators," such as Raphael Ogar Oko, a member of Teachers Without Borders who has helped bridge school segregation in Nigeria.

The four-person team from Renmin University created a social networking website to help college freshmen adapt easier to campus life. "Students can ask and answer questions related to life on campus. Freshmen can get useful information and suggestions from senior

students," Xue Shengbo, one of the team members, said.

Kyra Gaunt, one of the judges, a US ethnomusicologist, commended the students for their great idea and implementations. "I've never seen a young team like it realize its goal of solving a problem we've all encountered in such a short period of time – only half a year. I was surprised by its high level of teamwork and groundbreaking idea," she said.

"Those Chinese students are so young – with an average age of 18 – but they presented boldness in innovation," said Uffe Elbaek, founder and former principal of Kaospilots, Denmark's business and design school. "Though they looked unassuming when talking to the experts, I saw ambition in their work."

Another group that grabbed the spotlight was a multinational team of students from Croatia, France, the UK, Cyprus and Serbia. Formed in Vukovar, Croatia, as a response to Europe's segregated communities, the team introduced ideas on conflict management, peace keeping and science education through fun activities.

"We want to improve cooperation and foster social integration by mobilizing the youth living in conflict areas. By sponsoring workshops on topics such as popular science, we enable children from diverse ethnic backgrounds to work together," said Bojan Maricevic, leader of the group called ConSol – an abbreviation for "conflict solution."

"Promoting tolerance and empowering children to deal with every day battles is at the core of the program," he said.

Neven Kudumija, a student from Croatia, said the workshop's biggest contribution is the knowledge that participants bring back to their universities.



Students from different countries came to Beijing for the summer workshop.

Photo provided by Wiser-U

Event

Kids' Day at IDC Dental

To celebrate the first anniversary of IDC Dental, the clinic is introducing Kids' Day. The first one is happening today. Children ages 3 to 12 can meet dental characters such as Mr. Gloves, and they will receive free dental checkups. To register, email info@idcdentalbj.com with the child's name, age, parent's name and contact number.

Where: IDC Dental, Room 208, Building B, Winterless Center, 1 Xidawang Lu, Dongcheng District

When: August 27, 1-5 pm

Tel: 6538 8111

Cost: Free

SHOWBOAT Reopening

SHOWBOAT, Beijing's only floating party destination, reopens tomorrow. The refurbished venue, on Liangma River, features three floors of classy, luxurious space: the two-level cabin area is set to entertain electronic music fans, while the upper deck is for people wanting to chill-out and enjoy the river breeze. "Sexy navy" is the dress code for the evening.

Where: SHOWBOAT, 8 Liangmahe Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: August 28, starts 9 pm

Tel: 13718620361

Cost: Free

Bossa Nova music night

Yishu 8 art gallery is sponsoring a series of bossa nova evenings to welcome the cooler autumn evenings. Quartet Desafinado, a Beijing-based bossa nova group, will take center stage.

Where: Yishu 8, Cable 8 Factory, 8 Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: August 28, 7:30-8:45 pm

Tel: 6581 9058

Cost: 100 yuan

(By Liang Meilan)

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Private children's libraries booming in Beijing



CFP Photo

By Annie Wei

Chinese parents with school-age children take this saying very seriously: "It takes 10 years to grow a tree but a hundred years to cultivate a man." The good news for Pa and Ma is that there are now at least 10 public children's libraries in town to foster children's natural curiosity and creativity. They are all products of the vision of a handful of mothers.

Peekabook House, the biggest of the lot, houses 15,000 Chinese and English children's titles in its first store in Haidian District. "Many of the books were brought from the US by the store's founders," the manager, Cheng Xin, said, referring to the Chinese mothers who opened Peekabook in 2005, after spending a few years in the US, where they discovered children's libraries.

Douding Club's Children's Library started out with 500 books, a pet project of 30 mothers based in Haidian's Shijiecheng residential building.

The 2,000 picture books in another library, My Good Friend Children's Book, were donated by its founder Miao-

miaoma. She said now that her daughter is all has grown up, she is making a reality her dream of building a children's library in every corner.

Blumoon Children's Library was built by a full-time homemaker, Wang Li. "I spent 1,000 to 2,000 yuan on books every month. Now the library has 3,000 books," Wang said.

The libraries do not charge anything if children read the books on site. If parents want to bring some of the tomes home for bedtime reading, families need to sign up for a membership priced 300 to 800 yuan a year, or pay a fee for one-time use.

"This saves us a lot of money from buying new books," Ling Sha, a mother of a 2-year-old boy, said.

These libraries not only do not make a profit – they are also draining money from their owners in the name of community service. "It is definitely losing money," said Zhang Hong, founder of Moshezi Huihenguan, a library in Haidian District. "We need to subsidize its operations with what we make from other businesses. Membership can generate

some income, but it will take a long time just to make the ends meet," she said.

Peekabook House spends about 300,000 yuan for rent and utility bills each year. "There are many new members but few renew their membership, so the income is still unstable," Chen, the store manager, said.

Blumoon Children's Library spends much less in comparison – 72,000 yuan in rent a year – but its founder, Wang, said she is afraid the library might not last long.

Still, the libraries will not give up easily. Gongyi Xiaoshufang, a Haidian library opened by Zhang Hong, an architect with a 9-year-old daughter, had initially borrowed a room from a kindergarten since 2007. This year the kindergarten wanted to begin charging it; luckily the library founders found a free, 50-square-meter room at a community service station in Qinghuajiyuan, near Wudaokou subway station.

Volunteers will also go a long way in keeping these public children's libraries in the neighborhood, said Peekabook's Chen Xin.

Peekabook – Jinsong

Where: 2/F Building 10, Baihuanjiayuan, Shuangjing Dong Qiao, Chaoyang District

Open: Daily except Monday, 9:30 am – 8:30 pm

Tel: 8773 8382

Email: jinsong@peekalibrary.org

Peekabook – Sanyuan

Where: Room F305, Building 10, Phoenix City, Jia 5 Shuguang Xi Li, Chaoyang District

Open: Daily except Monday, 9:30 am – 8:30 pm

Tel: 5866 8064, 5866 8074

Email: sanyuanqiao@peekalibrary.org

Peekabook – Wanliu

Where: Room 302, Building 1, Bishuiyuntian, Wanliu Zhong Lu, Haidian District

Open: Daily except Wednesday, 9:30 am – 8:30 pm

Tel: 8256 7276, 8256 6324

Email: wanliu@peekalibrary.org

Blumoon Children's Library

Where: Room A-1019, Huayuan Gongyu, 32 Huayuan Dong Lu, Haidian District

Open: Daily except Monday, 9 am – 7 pm

Tel: 8203 6255

Email: blumoonreading@sina.com

Dream Kid Land

Where: 288 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

Open: 10 am – 8 pm

Tel: 8261 8538

Web: dreamkidland.cn
Mohezi Huihenguan
Where: 288 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
Open: 10 am – 8 pm
Tel: 8261 8538
Web: Huicholbooks.com

Sportaccord Combat Games open tomorrow

By Annie Wei

International athletes are streaming into the city for Sportaccord Combat Games, a high-level international tournament happening from tomorrow through September 4.

People can watch the games at three venues. The gymnasium of the National Olympic Sports Center will be hosting wushu, boxing, muay Thai and kickboxing matches. Judo, ju-jitsu, karate, taekwondo and kendo events will be held at Beijing Science and Technology University, while sumo, aikido, sambo and wrestling will be seen at China Agricultural University.

Tickets are available at beijing2010.org and the competition

venues. Tickets cost 20 to 90 yuan, with the most expensive being the opening ceremony's at 80 to 580 yuan. Students get 50 percent off, except for the opening ceremony.

National Olympic Sports Center

Where: 1 An'ding Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6491 2233

Beijing Science and Technology University

Where: 30 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 6233 2427

China Agricultural University

Where: 2 Qinghua Dong Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 6273 6110



Jacky Chan is the lead singer for the opening ceremony of Sportaccord Combat Games. Photo by Chizi/CFP

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

We're going to Hungary and Romania in October, and most car rental advice says to get an International Driving Permit (IDP) before you leave home, so I was wondering if there is any way to do it here in Beijing.

China does not have or recognize IDP. However, you can obtain a Chinese driving license first. Before you leave for abroad, get your Chinese driving license translated and notarized.

It helps you apply IDP or a temporary license in other countries easier. Or even in some countries, you can just drive with your Chinese driving license and its translated document.

I'm starting a new business in Beijing and I need to build a website. Do you have any good leads on companies that can help with building, hosting and running a simple website?

Try 126data.com. It is one of the most reliable website builders in town. They also provide services like domain name registration, domain appraisal, online file storage and security socket layer certification (ssl). They have talented graphic designers and experienced technicians who won't let you down. Call 400 600 2616 for more information or visit their website to see samples.

I have a Honda CB400 and I think riding a motorbike in Beijing is great, but doing it with other riders is better. Do you know of any bike club that arranges outings and races and where I can make friends?

You can try Sunny-Club, one of the city's biggest motorbike clubs with more than a hundred members. It organizes events such as motorbike races and rides out of town. You can find out from co-members the most interesting bike routes in the city and the best motorbike repairmen. Its office is located at 63 Lengquan Donglu, Haidian District, Tel. 6249 5953.

I keep hearing about China's hukou system in the media but don't really understand how it works. Can you recommend a website where I can get more information? I'm really curious about it since it seems to play a big role in people's lives.

Hukou, or the household registration system, has a huge influence on Chinese people's life and work. It has something to do with one's housing job, social welfare and children's education. For more information, contact China Culture Center (CCC), a Chinese cultural event organizer, which held a lecture on the topic several days ago. They can provide you with a recording of the event or introduce you to the speaker Jin Tao. Jin can give you some reading references. Call CCC at 6432 9341.

(By Liang Meilan)

Time to re

Leading artists assemble to define contemporary art

By He Jianwei

The China Avant-Garde Exhibition, held at the National Art Museum of China 21 years ago, was the first time many in the West saw contemporary Chinese art. Critics of the day called it the final curtain for the '85 New Wave Art Movement, a vague period of time in the mid-'80s when Chinese Avant-Garde emerged. In the years since, these artists have won attention with their exhibitions abroad and have broken auction records around the world. Last year, 21 representative artists from various periods and schools of the last 30 years were assembled for the first time at the newly founded Contemporary Art Museum. These leaders returned to the museum last Wednesday to show their latest paintings, sculptures and installations in an exhibit which is itself the history of China's



A giant stainless steel sculpture of a laughing man welcomes visitors at the front gate of the National Art Museum of China. The face – its mouth open and eyes closed – has become a dominant icon in the paintings and sculptures of creator Yue Minjun.

That sculpture is part of The Constructed Dimension: 2010 Chinese Contemporary Art Invitational Exhibition, a collection of the last 30 years of development in Chinese contemporary art.

More than 70 works by 20 artists are on display. Their oil paintings, sculptures, installations and photographs each represent a different area of contemporary art.

The exhibition invited only artists from the Contemporary Art Academy of China (CAAC), the first official organization devoted to the research of contemporary Chinese art since last November and an educational body under the Ministry of Culture.

The appointments of 21 artists to the academy last year were regarded as official recognition of contemporary art, and all of the appointees except Cai Guoqiang have works on display.

Many of the artists, today in their 40s and 60s, were formerly regarded as deviants.

Yue, an artist of the cynical realist style, was a former member of the Yuanmingyuan Artist Village, one of the first painting villages formed in the 1990s.

The decade was marked by intense artistic exploration and bred many talents, and its associated communal life encouraged new ideas. Many works from the period ask questions about every-

thing from the meaning of success to the role of gender. Many question the nature of art itself.

In 1995, the government evicted the community and the artists migrated to Songzhuang, part of a greater trend of artists migrating away from city centers.

Fang Lijun, the leader of the cynical realist movement, was another artist appointed by the academy. His portraits of bareheaded young men challenged orthodox thought and presented a community of monk-like men looking inward.

Wang Guangyi and Zhang Xiaogang, the top two contemporary painters, were also appointed by the academy.

Two of Wang's works, a large-scale installation *Visa*, created in 1994, and the oil on canvas *Methodology 1 of People's War*, created in 2004, are present at the exhibition.

Wang was one of the pioneers of Chinese pop art. In *Visa*, he drew on national symbols used at the visa offices of embassies around world to emphasize the distance between countries.

Besides dropping in some of the world's most recognizable brand names and logos, like Coca-Cola, Visa and McDonald's, Wang's Chinese pop art also incorporates more domestic imagery like workers, peasants and soldiers.

Like Wang, Zhang has emphasized the role of history and memory in the present. His works focus on the relationship between past, memory and history.

Zhang contributed his Green Wall series to the exhibition. In the 1960s and 1970s, a common practice in home decoration was to paint the bottom parts of interior walls green. The practice even

extended to hospitals, schools and government offices.

In the spirit of collectivism, there was no difference between private and public spaces. Zhang used the green wall as a symbol of the boundary between private and public spaces, and the psychological effects of living in such a non-segregated space.

"While these 20 artists cannot represent the country's entire contemporary art scene, their personalities and experiences do reflect the spirit that has guided it these past 30 years," Fan Di'an, director of the National Art Museum, said.

Luo Zhongli, president of the academy, said his institution will continue to appoint artists as it builds a program that can facilitate art creation, research and education.

Appointed artists do not receive salaries, but they are granted large budgets for art projects after four years of tenure.

In the past three decades, contemporary Chinese art has developed in an environment far different from the West's, and despite its fame no organized system of public museums, galleries or a training base for future artists has been developed.

"Because the artists and art organizations have been working independently," one of the main tasks for CAAC is to build a contemporary art museum," Luo said.

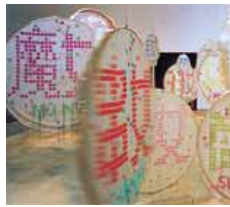
"When you go to Paris or New York, they have museums both for classical art and for contemporary art. As contemporary Chinese art has grown, it is time for China to have its own Guggenheim or MOMA."

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2005-2007 by Fang Lijun

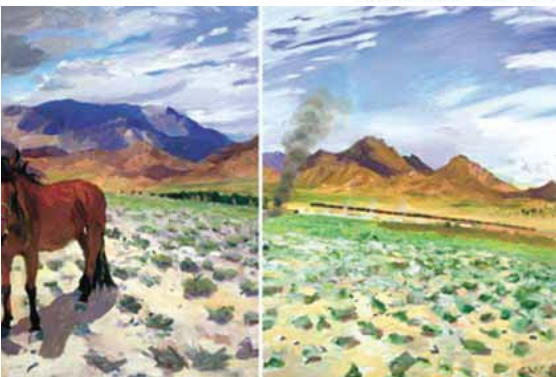


Badge by Lin Tianmiao

TURN

Academy of China.
contemporary art.

Methodology 1 of People's War by Wang Guangyi



Tibet-Qinghai Railway by Liu Xiaodong

Photos provided by the National Art Museum of China

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National Art Museum

"When you go to Paris or New York, they have museums both for classical art and for contemporary art. As contemporary Chinese art has grown, it is time for China to have its own Guggenheim or MOMA."

— Luo Zhongli, president of Contemporary Art Academy of China



The Constructed Dimension 2010 Chinese Contemporary Art Invitational Exhibition

Where: The National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie,
Dongcheng District

When: Until September 2, daily, 9 am - 5 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6400 6326



Polit-Sheer-Form by Song Dong



Luo Zhongli, president of Contemporary Art Academy of China



Bended Dimension by Yue Minjun

Capitalism as natural no more

By Charles Zhu

The economist idol Adam Smith said capitalism was a natural outgrowth of human nature and inevitable, but Joyce Appleby sees its rise as unlikely from the start.

The historian of capitalism in the Anglo-American world makes a dramatic break from conventional economic thinking in her new book *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism*.

She says that capitalism was "a startling departure from the norms that had prevailed for 4,000 years," one that permitted a new mentality where private individuals could pursue profits.

This theory follows in the footsteps of Joseph Schumpeter, the Austrian economist who said modern economic systems "incessantly revolutionize the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one."

Indeed, capitalism is driven by waves of entrepreneurial innovation, a "perennial gale of creative destruction."

Capitalism first surfaced in the Netherlands, but it was Britain that would be its true cradle.

By the late 18th century, the number of the British farmers had dropped from 80 percent of the population to half due to advances in commercial agriculture. The transformation helped create the huge pool of surplus labor on which capitalism feeds.

Appleby reviews a generation of economists who, long before Adam



The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism
By Joyce Appleby, 494pp, W. W. Norton & Company, \$29.95

Smith, built a case that the elements of any economy are fluid. This realization – a revolution of the mind – totally changed perceptions of usury and joint stock companies.

"There can be no capitalism ... without a culture of capitalism," she writes.

She exposes the ignominious forces that have been created to support profits, like the African slave trade and the Dickensian sweatshops.

However, she focuses most on capitalist enterprise and innovators from James Watt to Josiah Wedgwood and

such "industrial leviathans" as Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Henry Ford and Carnegie in the US, and Thyssen, Siemens and Zeiss in Germany.

She devotes her final chapters to how capitalism has evolved in the postwar era in the US, Japan, France, Germany, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. Many success stories reveal that government intervention can play a positive role in sustaining capitalism.

Yes, even in the aspiring laissez-faire US.

In the period between 1941 and 1960, the US government increased its support of research and development 13 times until it was funding 64 percent of the national efforts. It helped fund research at IBM that brought many technological breakthroughs such as the Internet.

She also touches on the recent financial crisis, a particular moment in the history of capitalism. But rather than blame it all on Wall Street executives for their exorbitant compensation packages or the gov-

ernment for deregulating its financial system, she simply notes the need for some government control of these excesses.

Most of all, Appleby is optimistic about the future.

"There is no reason to think that societies won't continue to modify and monitor their economies in pursuit of shared goals," she writes.

While her capitalism is a relentless revolution, it is not a mindless one.

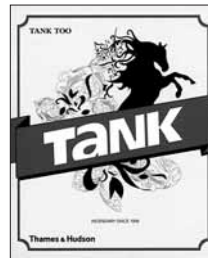
Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of international art, design and architecture books.



The Great LIFE Photographers
Edited by John Loengard and Gordon Parks, 608pp, Little Brown, 239 yuan

This text explores the careers of every *LIFE* magazine staff photographer of the 20th century, as well as a handful of others closely affiliated with the magazine, including Alfred Eisenstadt, Margaret Bourke-White, Gordon Parks, Eugene Smith and Joe McNally.



Tank Too
Edited by Masoud Golsorkhi and Andreas Laeuffer, 608pp, Thames & Hudson, 259 yuan

Since its inception in 1998, *Tank* magazine has been at the vanguard of fashion publishing. This book shows the best and brightest young photographers, illustrators and stylists that have graced the large-format magazine during the last eight years.



New Technologies, Products From Phaidon Design Classics
Edited by Phaidon Press, 1,100pp, Phaidon Press, 347 yuan

The objects in this collection are presented chronologically, beginning with an elegant pair of Chinese bonsai scissors from the early 1800s, still in production today. On glancing through the volumes, the reader will gain an understanding not only of the history of design, but the history of taste and culture.

(By He Jiamwei)

Three decades of stories cross the Straits

By He Jiamwei

There are two things that have driven Taiwanese writer Chu Tien-wen's passion for the language arts these 30 years: the desires to unearth humanity and to record modern times.

Shanghai Translation Publishing House released mainland editions of four of Chu's books this April. The three collections of short stories and one of essays represent her writings from 1972 to 2003.

When she was growing up, Chu's father was a writer and her mother a translator: the family passion for words found Chu during her first year of high school.

Her first book, *The Legend* (332pp, 29 yuan), collects 20 short stories written between 1972 and 1981. Each is drawn

from her campus life and captures the youthful excitement and confusion of Taiwan's social reforms in the 1970s and 1980s. During those turbulent years, many people who had been long oppressed became suddenly economically liberated members of the island's new middle class.

Chu's second phase of writing began when she graduated from Tam Kang University. Her second book, *A City of Hot Summer* (232pp, 25 yuan), compiles 15 short stories written from 1982 to 1987.

"I was so lucky that I experienced the New Wave cinema movement in Taiwan in 1982. All these stories were based on movie scripts I wrote during those years," Chu said.

The New Wave films were

known for realistic, down-to-earth and sympathetic portrayals of Taiwanese life. These films portrayed genuine stories of people living either in urban or rural Taiwan.

Chu's scripts were written for Hou Hsiao-Hsien, a leading figure in the New Wave cinema movement and the director of *A Time to Live*, *A Time to Die*, the winner of the International Federation of Film Critics Prize Forum of New Cinema at the 1986 Berlin International Film Festival.

Chu's third collection, *Fin de Siecle Splendor* (150pp, 18 yuan), brings together eight short portraits of solitary urban life written from 1988 to 1990. Its name was selected as a word and year play on Austrian symbolist painter Gustav



Chu Tien-wen talks about her 30-year career.

Qi Shangmin / CFP

Klimt, whose 1890 art was called the "fin de siecle elegance," Chu said.

The last volume, *The One I Love, Lives South of Great Ocean* (282pp, 27 yuan), contains 60 essays written between 1983 and 2003, in which she observes art, cinema, literature and social change.

Chu continues to reexamine the past to interpret it in her own way in her latest writings.

Web offers 'Business 101' for musicians

By Wang Yu

The Internet era is changing the music industry.

MP3s have decimated CD sales; contracts with record labels no longer guarantee that music will spread; musicians sell songs directly to their fans; live concerts are the new way to make a living; and vinyl releases attract vintage music lovers to new bands.

How does an artist survive in this tumultuous new world?

Musician Guide, a Chinese website built to share information about new ways to promote music, has the attention of the industry. But it may have a tough battle to win attention with its limited market capacity and fickle Chinese audience. It takes more to adapt a model for the domestic market.



6 steps to build a band's name

Create a logo that is remarkable and easy to recognize.

1



6

Register a microblog on Sina and use it to post updates related to everything above.

2



Register on Douban as an artist. Upload tracks on your page and invite others to follow.



Film your gigs and upload the videos to Tudou or Youku and leave the links on the band's page.

5

3



Try using MySpace's Chinese edition and Newcha to expand your network.

4



Contact promoters to join live shows and play with the underground's big names.

A year ago, when Music Guide founder Ma Jialong started to blog about promoting music online, he was merely a college student researching the domestic music industry. As an international business major, Ma never imagined entering the music business.

That changed in his senior year.

Ma was commissioned to help promote his friend, an up-and-coming hip-hop artist, who had already cut a demo CD his freshman year. Like many young entrepreneurs in Guangdong, Ma was known for making money even in high school, and so the young rapper turned to him for help.

He took a business trip to Beijing and Shanghai, hoping to help his friend land a contract, but no record label was interested in the music.

"I knocked on the doors of every record label I knew, including Sony, EMI and other big names," he says. "I failed to sell the demo, but I did meet some industry insiders. That's when I learned that because so few are ever profitable, record labels are unwilling to gamble on new artists."

Ma spent the following three years studying the mainstream and indie music scenes both home and abroad and found somewhat surprisingly that many Chinese people in big cities see weekend live concerts as an essential social activity, and that they are also willing to pay for digital music.

"We have a lot of consulting services we could offer mainstream artists, but since our budget is limited we cannot do much to help them. Now with an indie artist, we have a lot more options. There are lots of young, talented artists who only need a business guide," Ma says.

Together with his high school classmate Jingjing, who majored in film directing in Beijing, Ma started Musician Guide as his new business after graduating.

Today he lives in Foshan, where the indie music scene is almost nonexistent: his knowledge of the indie music scene is dependent on friends and the Internet.

Musician Guide introduces overseas music sharing sites, analyzes successful singers' business models and discusses how overseas artists promote their music.

"Basically, indie artists are no different than mainstream stars," Ma says. He envisions the indie scene as a pyramid, where the artists at the top make big money and the base expands as opportunity develops.

"Now is the time to unite everyone to promote music," says Tony Li, co-founder of Yi Record, a label that helps overseas artists build their reputations in China.

"Consider our last project for the Canadian band Jets Overhead. At first they came to

China for an Expo gig. Then the promoter Split Works organized a tour for them and the digital music company R2G took charge of their digital music distribution, we worked as a coordinator," he said.

Each agency took care of only its own job, but when they came together, the effect was remarkable.

Of course, these trends can hardly summarize the entire indie scene.

While the last generation of underground artists made a name for themselves through years of hard work, today's young musicians are unwilling to struggle and instead taking straight jobs.

For many contemporary indie artists, music is a pastime.

"[But] if an artist could earn money from his music or live concert, I think he would probably quit his job," Ma says.

At two gigs per month played to an audience of 100 and a 50-yuan ticket price, artists could earn at least 6,000 yuan every month. They can also earn money by selling CDs.

Sometimes, all an artist has to do is make him or herself popular on Douban," Ma says.

His Music Guide also has lessons to teach indie artists to shoot creative music videos on a budget. Popular videos on YouTube are chosen as examples, and the site lists every step of the process including relevant techniques in Adobe Premiere.

But much of the information for how to turn a profit remains English-only.

"The overseas indie music scene is mature. I've noticed that many of the sites Musician Guide links to are in English," says Chase Zhao, music critic.

While their advice may make sense for foreign artists, things are very different in China.

For those trying to reach the larger audience, the Internet coupled with aggressive self-marketing might be the only option," Zhao says.

But be wary of these new business partners. Even musicians who circulate their songs for free to promote the band can end up trapped. Several unscrupulous companies are known to profit off songs to which they do not own a copyright.

"In China, artists are all at a disadvantage. They get sucked into unfair deals with record labels and festivals because they think those are the only ways to spread their music," Li says.

Music Guide and Ma's consulting company are long-term projects, he says. Unlike many similar newcomers to the music scene, he and his partner are not in for the short term.

"Everything will depend on how the scene grows. Our costs are minimal and our investors know they must be patient," Ma says.

Preparing for the fall and winter

By Annie Wei

Thousands of Western-educated Chinese young adults are moving back to China to build their careers in different areas, instilling new concepts into old industries – like fashion. *Beijing Today* spoke with some independent brands and designers to see what they have come for the cold season.

Vega Wang – empowering women



Vera Wang, 25, graduated from the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London and set up her own brand at Jianwai Soho earlier this year. Three other stores that sell her designs, and several magazines have showcased her work.

"My design is not restrained by seasons," Wang said. She's not one concerned with what's "in," as she wants her designs to be timeless. Her work reflects her life and things happening at the moment.

Wang's last collection, themed "first love and last ceremony," was like that. When she designed that collection, she realized that she still retained a passion for drawing, which she's been doing since she was a child. So "love," in this case, doesn't have to mean that between couples – it's a person's love for hobbies

or anything of interest.

"An independent brand should have something it wants to express," Wang said. She does not read fashion magazines or care what is popular in Europe or North America. "After all, our body shapes are different," she said.

Wang is currently working on a new collection that will feature something she has not used before: leather.

Seeking an environmentally friendly leather, she searched for a while before finding a reliable manufacturer in Shanghai.

Her new collection will have fewer looks because she will focus more on accessories like necklaces and scarves. Her previous collections had 40 and 35 looks, respectively.

Wang, who said she prefers living in Xiamen, Fujian Province because it's considered "the utopia for young Chinese literates," said she also likes Beijing for its mixed culture scene. "Art, music and fashion are always growing together."

Her boutique at Jianwai Soho carries all her original designs, like ready-to-wear shoes, bags and accessories, and also provides custom-made and made-to-wear services.

Vega Wang

Where: Jianwai Soho Building 6, Level B1, Boutique 662 (across from Tony's Studio, near SHINE boutique)

Open: 1-6 pm

Tel: 5900 2279

Website: Vegazaishiwang.com



Photos provided by Vegazaishiwang.com



Photos provided by Candy & Caviar

Candy & Caviar – modern and chic

This brand is designed and operated by Candy Lin, who grew up in California, US. Lin did not major in fashion but she discovered her passion for it after college and started the brand two years ago.

Candy & Caviar's latest collection, Spring 2011, is inspired by black and white movies. The pieces are scheduled for release at the beginning of September. The items will be available on its newly updated online shop, along with a Beijing showroom in China Central Place opening at the end of September or beginning of October.

The brand tries to bring together the classic and unconventional and bring a touch of sophisticated evening glamour to the light of day. Its coming collection is for young urban dwellers who are looking for polished and quintessentially chic modern looks.

Candy & Caviar

Where: Room 921, Building 16, China Central Place, 6, Xi Dawang Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: By appointment

Website: Candyandcaviar.com

Shokay – luxury fabric from up high

Since 2007, Shokay founders Maria So from Hong Kong and Carol Chyau from Taiwan have grabbed many headlines on the mainland for the way they started their brand.

The two young women were interested in social enterprise when they studied at Harvard in 2004. On a trip to Qinghai Province and Tibet, they wondered how they might help improve local herders' living conditions.

That thought budded into a business plan that won first prize in competitions at both Harvard and Amsterdam. With the money they won, they started Shokay in 2007, "a lifestyle brand that designs stylish products made from soft yak down," according to the website.

They have a flagship store in Shanghai's Tianzifang – a shopping district somewhat similar to Beijing's Nan Luoguxiang – and sell products in 100 other locations in 10 countries. The global consumer interested in ordering can do so from shokay.com, said Jocelyn Xie, the brand's marketing manager.

Compared to wool or cashmere, Shokay's yak down is a luxury fiber that cannot be mass-produced. Shokay yaks mainly live in the mountainous Himalayan regions of Western China. Each yak produces about 100 grams of fine downy fiber. The average fineness of down from an adult yak is 18 to 20 microns, while the length is 30-40 millimeter. Unlike wool, the scales of yak fiber are in a waved mosaic pattern, resulting in a smooth fiber that does not cause irritation.

The brand sources yak fiber directly from Tibetan herders, and in that way helps them earn a sustainable living while preserving their traditional lifestyle. The brand works with 260 households in the Heimache township of Qinghai Province, where they source fiber, train the herders how to hand-spin yarn and provide health-care training to local women.

Most of Shokay's products are adult accessories and home collections made of 100 percent yak or yak blends, starting from \$30 (200 yuan). The design is simple but functional, like a hand warmer, hat or scarf, soft and cozy for the winter.

Shokay

Website: Shokay.com



Clutches, starting at 445 yuan



Pillar case, price unknown

Photos provided by Shokay

Experiencing historical flavors in modern Beijing

By Wang Yu

The best way for newcomers to experience authentic Beijing is not by visiting renovated temples but through the city's centuries-old culinary traditions.

Let go of your prejudices and dive into a plate of fried tripe from a neighborhood diner, or salt-boiled wheat cakes sold out of backyards. Granted, it may take a bit of courage to try such exotic food, but Beijing is, after all, a city of fortune and favor, of old emperors and modern-day leaders – it is, in other words, not a city for the timid.

If you can overcome your fears, you'll get an unforgettable memory of eating the food of Old Beijing.

Dalian Huoshao in old area

Hidden inside a neighborhood at Hepingli, this restaurant's quality is attested to by experienced epicures who are familiar with traditional foods.

It is always hard to find a seat if you arrive around dinnertime. The restaurant does not take reservations, so diners are suggested to simply wait until the mostly middle-aged diners finish their food and conversation.

Although ordinary dishes and hotpot are available, the restaurant is famous for, as its name implies, Dalian huoshao, a traditional type of pan-fried roll-on-a-stick with different stuffings, from pork with fennel to lamb with green onion to vegetarian options. The sticks are usually eaten with vinegar, like dumplings.

These sticks are fried golden and a little burnt but very soft on the inside. Its smell is one to be savored. The huoshao is best matched with kohlrabi and the restaurant's sauce.

Make sure to drink your bowl of free corn porridge. It's the most important part of this vintage working-class Beijing dinner.

Fried tripe (25 yuan) is also available at Xuji, though it doesn't compare with Dongxingshun's offering. The sauce (3 yuan) is a must-try.

Traditional Beijing snacks such as zhagezhi (8 yuan) are also special. This snack is simple fried dough eaten with vinegar and sesame oil. The zhagezhi here is creamy on the inside, much to diners' satisfaction.

Xuji Dalian Huoshao

Where: Opposite to a gas station, east of Jiang-zhaikou intersection (first intersection north of Andingmen subway station), Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm, 5-9 pm

Tel: 6420 5345



Fried tripe, 25 yuan



Mustard cabbage, 8 yuan



Zhagezhi, 8 yuan

Photos by Song Nannan

100-year-old flavor

Dongxingshun is one of the most famous Muslim fried tripe – cow stomach – restaurants in Beijing, but it also has a long and interesting history.

The restaurant is located on the east side of the river at Houhai, putting it in a bustling area full of Chinese traditional handicraft shops, bars and clubs. Though it's surrounded by modern entertainment options, Dongxingshun, with its 100-plus years of history, has retained its classical feel, as it's rebuilt from an old three-room courtyard.

Owner Zhang Zixing's great-grandfather, Zhang Quancai, started the restaurant two blocks away as a street stall in 1883. His restaurant "Baodu Zhang" soon became famous among blue-collar workers in the neighborhood.

New patrons will be impressed by the calligraphy on the walls and photos of celebrities. Many cultural figures have stepped into the restaurant, including top Peking opera singers Mei Lanfang, Ma Lianliang and Li Wanchun. Modern artists, such as rock pioneers Zhang Chu and Dou Wei, can also be seen in the photos.

It's not the stars that attract diners, however. The restaurant thrives because of its dishes' unique flavors. Although many dishes are described as "fried," no oil is used during the process. The raw material is the stomach of cows or sheep.

Different parts of the stomach have different names, such as baiye (20 yuan) and duren (30 yuan). After being carefully washed, the stomach is cut into pieces and boiled in hot water before being served. It sounds easy, but timing is crucial to the final product – something the restaurant has perfected, judging by its popularity.

The food is usually paired with a special sauce of sesame butter, sesame oil, salt, coriander, chili and other spices. The sauce is not too salty or sweet and the flavor of sesame activates the taste buds on first bite.

Besides the main course, snacks in the restaurant are also worth trying. The almond tofu (5 yuan) is made of sugar, almond and something similar to jelly. The plum syrup (4 yuan) is also very popular.

Dongxingshun

Where: 17, Shichahai Qianhai Dongyan, Xicheng District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm, 5-8 pm.

Tel: 6712 3690



Fried liver, 8 yuan

Yaoji Fried Liver

Yaoji is the most popular old restaurant in the neighborhood around Gulou, usually with a long queue outside. Most of the residents in the area can still remember the simple pleasure of sharing a bowl of fried liver with their parents after school. The *baozhi* at Yaoji is also recommended.

Where: 331, Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 6 am – 10:30 pm

Tel: 8401 0570

Xiaochang chen

This restaurant is famous for its salt-boiled baked-wheat cake, which contains pork, tofu, liver and kidney – these are used because traditional working-class people could not afford more expensive meat – in traditional sauces.

Where: Xiaoyou Hutong, Shichahai, Xicheng District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6402 5858



Luzhu, 10 yuan
Photos by Song Nannan



Almond tofu, 5 yuan



Duren, 30 yuan

Photos by Song Nannan

Calligraphy for contemporary times

By Zhang Dongya

"The era of traditional Chinese calligraphy has passed. I am trying to explore ways to revive it," said Feng Mingqi during the opening of his solo exhibition at Yishu 8 Gallery last Saturday.

Script is Feng's first exhibition in Beijing. It presents 15 pieces that feature Feng's signature "aerial calligraphy," creating new scripts based on ancient styles of calligraphy such as *li shu* in Han Dynasty (220 BC – 220 AD).

Feng, born in Guangdong Province in 1951, immigrated as a boy to what was then British-colony Hong Kong. He began doing odd jobs after finishing primary school and has experienced more than 30 types of jobs, including truck driver and delivery man. He encountered calligraphy when he was 25 and began practicing his strokes after work.

In his mid-'30s, Feng relocated to New York City. A few years later he began holding exhibitions in the US, UK, Japan and Switzerland. He chose to work under the pseudonym Fung Ming Chip, the Cantonese name for his

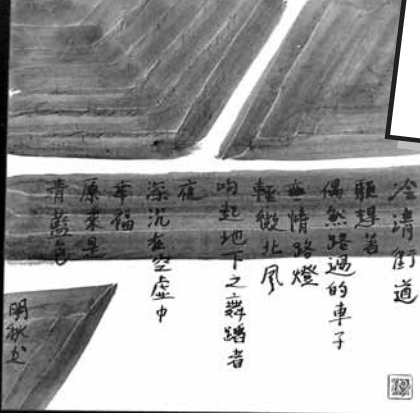
hometown.

In the past decade, Feng has created some 100 types of script, each given a descriptive name such as "straight line scatter script," "round script," "plum blossom script" and "willow script." Each piece on show in Beijing represents a different type of script.

"His precise, ordered strokes are a manifestation of a long tradition, one that is redefined in time and space. And we are also witness to an immersion in poetry," Christine Cayol, the curator of Yishu 8, said.

Besides being a visual artist, Feng is also a literary artist. The indiscernible script in some of his works is poetry. "Traditional calligraphy has a strong expressiveness that comes from the strokes rather than the contents," Feng said, "so I am not only writing characters, I am also painting and writing poetry."

Feng works from his studio in New York, but also has one in Hong Kong, Taiwan and a new office in Shenzhen.



Fung Ming Chip — Script

Where: Yishu 8 Gallery, Cable 8 Factory, 8 Langjiayuan, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until September 18, daily except Sunday, 10 am – 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6581 9058

Upcoming

Nightlife Blackwater

This Beijing-based band plays Irish music on the accordion, guitar and mandolin.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: September 2, 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

Stage in September

Concert

London Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: September 12, 7:30 pm
Admission: 200–2,010 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Pictures at an Exhibition – Xu Mu's Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District
When: September 23, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30–380 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 24, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80–380 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Joanie Madden and Cherish the Ladies

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
When: September 29–30, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180–880 yuan
Tel: 400 610 3721

Drama

Du Lala

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: September 1–5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80–680 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Romeo and Zhu Yingtai

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District
When: September 3–4, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180–480 yuan
Tel: 6405 8424

The Poison

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: September 10–11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 20–150 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

I Love Peach Blossom

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: September 14–15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 20–180 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

Red Rose and White Rose

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 14–23, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100–480 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

5 Friday, August 27

Exhibition Qingji's Solo Exhibition

Wei's paintings speak of love and betrayal, envy and happiness, strength and cowardice.

Where: Embassy of the Czech Republic, 2 Ritau Lu, Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 5, daily, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8532 9500

Movie

Paris (2008)

Pierre, a professional dancer, is stricken with a serious heart ailment. While waiting for a transplant that may or may not save his life, he passes the time by people watching from the balcony of his Paris apartment. It is the city and its inhabitants who now seem to dance before him.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District
When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Kay Huang's First

Besides being a songwriter and producer, Taiwanese artist Kay Huang is also a composer of film and television soundtracks, as well as a favorite judge at talent competitions.

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 280 yuan, 380 yuan for VIP

Tel: 5914 8087



6 Saturday, August 28

Nightlife Peking Opera – Muke Village and Scold Cao Cao by Rataplan

This drama is being staged by a group that was established to promote Peking Opera today. Its founders are young actors who won first and second prizes at national Peking Opera competitions.

Where: Huguang Guild Hall, 3 Hufang Lu, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 80 yuan, 180 yuan, 280 yuan, 380 yuan for VIP
Tel: 400 810 1887

Exhibition

Garden of Pine – Yangjiang Group's Exhibition

Group members Zheng Guogu, Chen Zaiyan and Sun Qinglin depict social phenomena from the grassroots perspective and challenge mainstream beliefs.

Where: Tang Contempo-

rary Art, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 30, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6436 1258

Movie

The Legend of 1990 (1998)

It is after World War II and Max, a transplanted American, goes to an English pawnshop to sell his trumpet. The shopkeeper recognizes the tune Max plays for him as one on an unreleased album, restored from shards found in a piano salvaged from a ship that is now slated for demolition. The shopkeeper asks who wrote the piece and Max tells him the story of "1900."

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6270 1928

7 Sunday, August 29

Nightlife The Rodney Mack Philadelphia Big Brass

Composed of the US' top brass musicians, Rodney Mack has performed with such groups as New York's Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Baltimore Symphony.

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 80–380 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Exhibition

No Way – Jiang Huajun Solo Exhibition

Jiang's paintings are meditations and recreations of his surroundings.

Where: PIFO New Art Studio, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 12, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9562

Movie

Hiroshima Mon Amour (Hiroshima My Love, 1959)

The film revolves around the subjects of memory and oblivion. A young Frenchwoman has just spent the night with a Japanese man in Hiroshima, where she came for the filming of a movie about peace. He reminds her of the first man she has loved, a German soldier during World War II.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu,

Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 8459 9269



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By Chu Meng

Chinese food may be tasty and relatively inexpensive, but Westerners are sorely mistaken if they assume its extra helpings of vegetables and minimal use of butter make it healthy.

And this mass denial may be what is driving its popularity.

A recent investigation by the *Daily Mail* found that Chinese food is beating Britain's own fish and chips, American pizza, Thai food and even Indian curry for the title of Britain's favorite cuisine. In fact, 39 percent of Western diners tend to favor sweet and sour oriental flavors when dining out.

While delicious it may be, doctors, scientists and the human body agree that healthy it is not. In fact, some Chinese food is a nutritional disaster with its lethal payload of oil and excess seasonings.

The Western "Chinese classic": General Tso's chicken, packs on around 1,500 calories and has 40 percent more sodium than the typical person needs in a day," Rachel Krech, a contributing writer to Associated Content, said in an article titled "How to eat healthy at a Chinese restaurant."

Those 1,500 calories are without counting the fried rice and egg roll that come standard.

Chinese food falls far short of anything resembling good nutrition: even when looking at the appetizers and vegetables, she said.

"Some Chinese vegetables can have up to 600 calories. But why? Well, most Chinese vegetables are fried and are often salted or laced with soy sauce, obviously containing high amounts of sodium, which is a huge burden to our kidney and blood vessels," Krech said.

What most people ignore is that even MSG-free Chinese food is not healthy. The high amounts of sodium and sugar, as well as generous thick sauces and seasonings such as Sichuan pepper sauce, condensed soybean sauce, sesame paste, sweet and sour sauce cause hypertension, high blood pressure and abdominal fat.

Fan Zhihong, a Chinese nutrition professor, listed the calories found in some of the most commonly ordered Chinese dishes on her blog to point out how high in calories Chinese food can be.

A serving of any stir fried vegetables was over 600 calories; crispy chicken noodles were 800 calories; egg fried rice climbed to more than 1,000 calories; chicken with black bean sauce was about 800 calories; and sweet and sour pork was 1,200 calories.

"A McDonald's double cheese burger is 420 calories," Fan said, comparing Chinese cuisine to the epitome of Western junk food.

"A bowl of rice is only 120 calories. People who jog non-stop for one hour can only burn 400 to 600 calories. So someone who eats one or two Chinese dishes and a serving of fried rice will have to run at least five hours to burn off all the calories," she said.



Huanhuan/CFP Photo

Smart ways to cut calories

For those who cannot give up Chinese food, there is hope. Emilia Klapp, an American nutritionist and registered dietician with the American Dietetic Association, offers a few tips and tricks about how to order a healthy Chinese meal.

1. Avoid buffets

When you are in the mood for Chinese food, avoid buffets. Usually, you will not want to leave the restaurant until you feel you have eaten your money's worth. Unfortunately, even if you break even, the restaurant sends you out the door with several thousand extra calories. Stick to restaurants where a waiter takes your order.

2. Start with a soup

A smart move when eating at a Chinese restaurant is to order a soup. It will put less overall fat in your meal and the broth will fill you up. This means you will eat less when the main course arrives.

Starting with an appetizer may ruin your goal of cutting calories, carbohydrates and fat. Pork ribs, egg rolls, fried wontons and any other fried foods are high in fat, sugar and calories. If the waitress brings fried noodles to keep you busy, put them aside or ask her to remove them from the table. Try to pass the time instead by drinking tea.

3. Choose light, healthy courses

Look for dishes that are

rich in vegetables and light on meat. You can reduce calories by choosing seafood or chicken instead of choosing beef, pork, lamb or duck. You can also order two dishes: one that has meat as the base and one that is mainly vegetables such as green beans or spinach.

4. Avoid fatty dishes

Read the menu carefully and avoid the fattiest dishes. Some words will give you a clue: beef, butter, breadcrumbs or crunchy pork. Find out if the meat was fried before being sauteed with the vegetables. If that is the case, ask if they can sautee the meat instead of frying it.

5. Watch out for hidden carbs

Sweet and sour sauces, as well as other sauces typical of Chinese cuisine, are full of carbs. They can cause diabetics to experience a spike in blood sugar. Sugar and starches add carbohydrates to many main dishes. You will also find carbs in the cornstarch used to thicken sauces and in the meat marinade. Read the fine print and ask the waiter to fill in the rest.

6. Be careful with the rice

You know that a Chinese restaurant will serve you a big bowl of rice. You hopefully also know that rice contains many carbohydrates. Avoid fried rice and regular rice flavored with soy sauce to cut much of the fat and sodium from your meal. If possible, ask for brown rice which

is rich in fiber. Remember that each cup of rice has at least 45 grams of carbohydrates.

7. Reduce salt

Order dishes with light sauces, not too thick. If you need soy sauce, ask for a low-sodium version and mix it with steamed brown rice, not with fried rice. To add flavor to your meal you can add some hot sauce, which has less sodium and fewer calories.

8. Share the dishes

If you have company, order a main dish, a soup or appetizer and some rice. Share it.

9. Eat with chopsticks

Eat your meal with chopsticks. If you are new to the utensils, they may slow you down and cause you to eat less. Don't fall into the temptation of asking for a fork and knife.

10. And for dessert

As for dessert, order fruit and pass on any ice-cream with sugared walnuts. If you follow the above recommendations, you should feel pretty good about having eaten a healthy meal. Why ruin it?

Lastly, don't forget about the power of leftovers. With so many calories in a typical dish, there is no reason to strain to eat it all in one sitting. Ask for a container to take food home and eat it the next day. Chinese food usually keeps well and it's easy to split the calories across two or three meals.

(By Chu Meng)

Up to Bashang for a northern-frontier excursion



Lightning River zigzagging across the plateau in Guyuan is a grand sight.

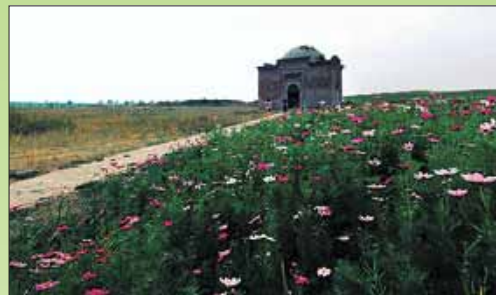
Photos by Haiou

By Zhang Dongya

Only 200-kilometers from Beijing, Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province is an accessible city and the nearest urban center to the Bashang Plateau, a natural grassland where one can camp, view sunrises and sunsets and go horse-back riding.

Zhangjiakou is an old city that was once called the "northern-frontier city" because it was the first point of defense against invading armies. Visitors can explore what the city has to offer in a half a day.

With a high altitude and low temperatures, visitors who go will get a chance to experience autumn before it officially arrives.



The legend of Shuzhuang Lou in Guyuan County attracts many visitors.

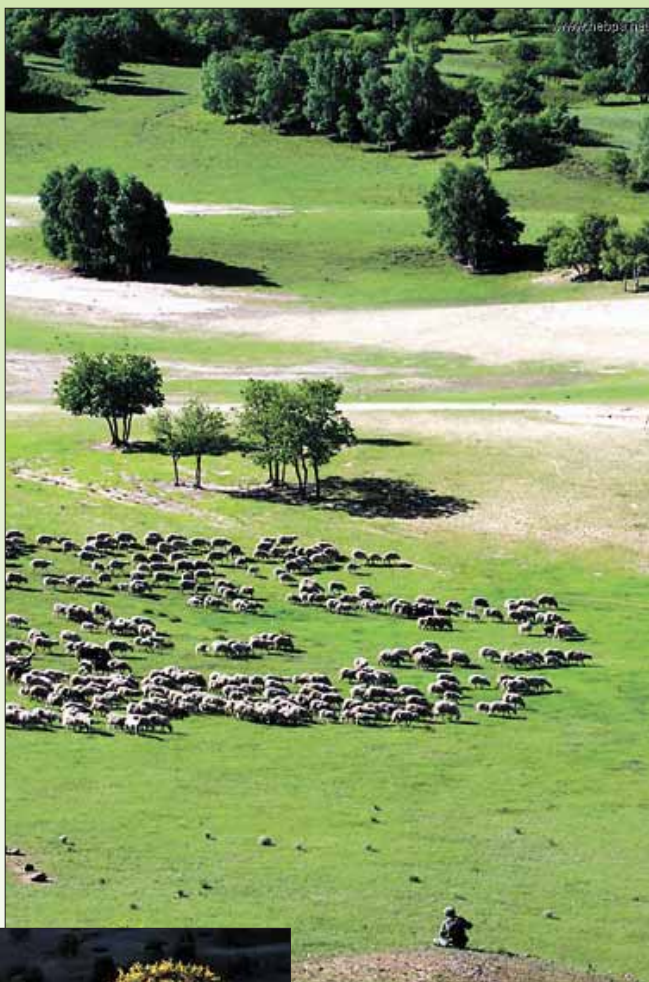
Photo by Xiaodong

Across Birch Range to Bashang

The first stop out of downtown Zhangjiakou is Huapi Ling, or Birch Range, in Chongli County. It is the boundary between Chongli and Zhangbei counties, and the watershed between Bashang and Baxia (the high and low areas of Zhangjiakou).

Birch Range's peak has an altitude of 2,000 meters, which makes it the highest point in Bashang. The average temperature here is 4°C; even during the hottest time of the year, in August, it only gets up to 15°C. Snow covers the peaks all year-round, while flowers blossom halfway up the hill and birch woods are all about. Visitors can experience the seasons changing when hiking up.

Summer is the best season to view the thick forests and hundreds of species of wild flowers and plants, including peonies, wild roses and waist-high golden lotus. There is also a secondary forest where locals have spotted roe deer and boars.



Attractions in Guyuan

On the vast expanse of grassland in Nangou Village, Guyuan County, a brick, south-facing domed building named Shuzhuang Lou, or Makeup Building, attracts many visitors.

Legend said this square building was built in just one night for Empress Xiao during Liao Dynasty (907-1125) for the sake of her hair and makeup, thus the building's name. She apparently found her hair so messy one night that she ordered servants to construct a building so she could fix her hair and dress.

The area around Makeup Building was said to be the summer resort where the imperial family in Liao hunted.

Archeologists later verified the building as a Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368) tumulus. They found silk articles in the Yuan style, and the building was presumed to be a place where people offered sacrifices.

A river called Lightning River – like lightning through the plateau – winds and twists across the grassland. The river is a tributary to Luan River, and it's unique because it flows from the south, and along either side are hills. Locals have described this as the "river that flows backwards through mountains without peaks."

The best place to view this sight is on Zhuangfomiao Mountain, where you can see the river zigzagging across the plateau while flocks of sheep roam around. A reservoir around Lightning River forms a lake, which sparkles under the sun.

The other attraction in Guyuan is Five Flower Meadow, featuring varied wild flowers in different seasons. The Meadow also has an old tale related to Empress Xiao. It is said Xiao saw a deer with five colors flash away when she was hunting in Guyuan. She chased the deer with her servants until it disappeared in the grassland. The next day, the grassland changed into five colors.

Continued on page 21...

Five Flower Meadow in Guyuan features different wild flowers in different seasons.



... continued from page 20

The meadow changes colors with the months. In May, it is covered by pink anemone rivularis, while between June and August, golden chain covers the land. In September and October, purple fruits of burnets are scattered around.

The meadow is also a habitat for birds and animals. If you're lucky, you can see more than 20 species of water birds there.

Zhongdu Grassland in Zhangbei

Zhangbei was once known as Zhongdu – Central Capital of the Yuan Dynasty in 1307 – due to its military importance and beautiful scenery. The grassland was called Zhongdu Grassland to commemorate its historic significance.

Zhongdu Grassland is an important part of the Inner Mongolia Plateau. It used to be the place where emperors in Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) went hunting.

As the closest well-preserved natu-

ral grassland to Beijing, it is a resort spot favored by Beijingers during the summer. The temperature here is on average 10 C lower than in Beijing. The average temperature in July is 17 C, and it rarely ever gets above 24 C.

In Zhongdu Grassland, visitors can see ancient Mongolia customs. You can stay in a Mongolian yurt, drink butter tea and kumis made by locals and sing and dance in Mongolian costumes, or you can pitch a tent and make a campfire with locals.

Horseback riding is a must on the grassland. Professional Mongolian equestrians also put on shows.

Besides the natural grassland, the planted fields in Zhangbei offer another landscape for visitors. A large area of cole flowers has attracted many who missed the blooming period in southern China. The local government has offered subsidies for peasants to plant more crops with pretty flowers. They have also tried to turn their cornfields into a maze for tourists to play in.



Zhongdu Grassland in Zhangbei is the nearest natural grassland to Beijing, where visitors can camp and go horseback riding.

Photos by Heiye

Travel information

Recommended itinerary

Day 1: Take a train (30 yuan) or long-distant bus (70 yuan) to Zhangjiakou, which takes about three hours. Rent a coach or car to Chongli County. Enter Bashang through Birch Range and head for Guyuan in the evening and stay a night in Guyuan.

Day 2: Travel in Guyuan: Makeup Building, Lightning River and Five Flower Meadow. Head for Zhangbei County in the evening and stay overnight in Zhangbei.

Day 3: Travel to Zhongdu Grassland in Zhangbei and go back to Beijing in the evening.

Admissions include:

Zhongdu Grassland in Zhangbei 20 yuan

Five Flower Meadow in Guyuan 10 yuan



About Zhangjiakou

Zhangjiakou, located northwest of Beijing, is adjacent to Shanxi Province and Inner Mongolia. It is in the transition area of the loess plateau in Shanxi, the Inner Mongolia Plateau and North China Plain. Yinshan Mountain stretches across the city and divides it into two areas: Bashang (above the dam) and Baxia (under the dam). Baxia contains the downtown area and suburbs, while Bashang has several counties, including Guyuan and Zhangbei, featuring broad grassland and rivers.



Dining



Crab-licious

Enjoy your mouthwatering hairy crabs prepared by Rouge & Valley chefs. Bring your business clients or partners over for one of the finest crab lunches and dinners around. Chinese Master Chef He's recommendations will not fail to disappoint. Receive a complimentary hairy crab with each semi-buffet lunch and dinner order.

Where: Rouge & Valley Cafe, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

Cost: 98 yuan per person (semi-buffet lunch), 168 yuan (semi-buffet dinner); 15 percent surcharge
Tel: 5993 8888 ext. 2331

Healthy mushrooms

Gather the family and invite your favorite friends for Scene a Cafe's bountiful buffet of succulent seafood. Come for classic Scene favorites and the flavor of the month: healthy mushroom dishes from the colorful kitchen "theater." Highlights include tender chicken meat with mushroom ragout, mixed mushroom salad, mushroom soup and deep-fried dumplings with mushrooms.

Where: Scene a Cafe, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
When: September 1-30

Cost: 258 yuan (lunch buffet), 298 yuan (dinner buffet, excluding Friday night buffet and Sunday Brunch); 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 35



Canadian lobster festival

This September, Kempinski presents a mouthwatering monthlong festival honoring the king of seafood: the coveted Canadian lobster. Dine on this delicacy at either Dragon Palace or Trattoria La Gondola. Each restaurant's chefs have created signature lobster dishes for the occasion that show off the crustacean's best light. Italian head chef Paulo Ascani from Trattoria La Gondola offers creamy lobster polenta with spicy Italian sausage, in addition to a delicate appetizer of chilled lobster carpaccio with fresh basil and sundried tomato vinaigrette. For an Asian flare, Chinese executive chef So at Dragon Palace has concocted a stunning tom yum goong soup with a whole dressed lobster, as well as some sinfully crisp Canadian lobster fritters served with fresh green wasabi.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 11:30 am - 2 pm, 5:30-10 pm

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4217

Celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival

Swissotel Beijing has prepared three exquisite mooncake gift boxes. Choose between Joyful Autumn (6 pieces), Harmony Moon (8 pieces) and Delightful Exquisite (6 pieces). The traditional mooncake fillings include red lotus seed with egg yolk, mixed nuts with ham, red bean paste, black sesame paste, jujube and green tea paste.

Where: Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 6553 2288 ext. 2148

Mid-Autumn Festival

This Mid-Autumn Festival, Grand Hyatt Beijing presents Beijing-style mooncake gift boxes and a wide selection of festive gift baskets. Order a Premium Mooncake Box from Grand Hyatt Beijing at a very special price. For bulk or corporate purchases, customized logos and cover sheets are available upon request.

Where: The Grand Hyatt Beijing, 26 Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District

Cost: 248 yuan (the Grand Premium Mooncake Box), 128 yuan (the Grand Hyatt Deluxe Mooncake Box), 458 yuan (the Grand Hamper), 888 yuan (the Deluxe Hamper), 3,888 yuan (the Grand Deluxe Hamper)

Tel: 8518 1234 ext. 373



Boiled 'live seafood'

Beijing's first ever live seafood is available at CBD International Cuisine. Pick and choose from an array of local and imported shellfish including yabbies, scallops, lobsters, prawns and crabs, and have them made fresh in savory court bouillon or bouillabaisse. The live seafood special is available for dinner on Saturdays and Sundays only.

Where: CBD International Cuisine, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Every weekend

Cost: 256 yuan per adult, 126 yuan for children 5 to 12; 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 6530 9383

Aviation

Singapore Airlines serves red burgundy

Singapore Airlines is now serving six of the most acclaimed "Grand Cru" Red Burgundy labels to Suite and First Class customers. Passengers in these classes can look forward to a "Grand Cru" Red Burgundy label in addition to the current wine selection. SIA will be the only airline to offer these labels on board, details of which can be found in the Annex.

Singapore Airlines' Suites and First Class customers can also choose from an international selection of beer and liqueurs, as well as cocktails and mocktails. The airline also offers Dom Perignon 2000 and Krug Grande Cuvée champagne, as well as a selection of top-quality wines from France, Italy, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and the US, as well as port wine from Portugal.

Event

Affordable art unveiled

The first Public Art Festival (PAF) opened at White Space Hall in 22 International Art Plaza last Sunday. As many as 400 pieces including woodcuts and installations are on display. Most are by young Chinese artists, though a few are by internationally renowned painters. Prices range from 100 to 10,000 yuan. The low-priced pieces, geared to fulfilling popular demand, attracted hundreds of buyers on the opening day. The festival will continue daily through September 6.

Where: White Space Hall, 22 International Art Plaza, 32 Baiziwai Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am - 9 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5971 2140

(By Zhang Dongya)



Beijing runs for love

Run for Love, part of the "New Balance 6K Run," started with a bang on August 22 at Beijing Olympic Forest Park. Runners from the city and nearby regions gathered in excitement and passion.

As part of the 2010 city sports festival, marking two years since the end of the Beijing Olympics, "NB 6K" continues the Olympic experience as it shifts its focus from professional athletes to the enormous population of casual runners. As many as 4,000 locals participated in this year's race of endurance. Many companies also attended the race as a group to use the day as a

team-building experience.

By 8 o'clock in the morning, the south square of the Olympic Forest Park was filled with participants. When the starter pistols were fired, the three signal lights lit up and a sea of runners gushed off like a giant red wave.

The exciting and exhilarating "NB 6K" atmosphere was further enriched by various visits from the New Balance leading race vehicle, the New Balance sneaker mascot and bikini girls who went sweating with the runners. The event was a great chance for Chinese runners to train, and a big step in the new trend of promoting health and fitness.

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Do I have to break a leg?

By Li Zhixin

Wang Ran, 25, has been short on luck this year.

His girlfriend broke up with him as soon as she returned to Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, where her parents live and found her a job.

Wang tried everything to save the relationship, including resigning from his job in Beijing and staying in Taiyuan for several more months, but the girl remained unmoved and said she was not confident about their future. She eventually married a rich guy introduced by her relatives in her hometown.

"I know I am a common guy inexperienced in affairs of the world and without much money, but I have been striving to give her a better life," Wang said. "It really broke my heart when she told me directly that she couldn't count on future happiness with me."

When he returned to Beijing, several friends threw him a small welcome dinner and consoled him, imploring him to forget about her.

"I know she wouldn't come back to me, but I had to try," Wang told me. "I really didn't want to give up our four-year relationship, but everyone around me said to not beat a dead horse."

I was confused. "She raised a horse? Why did you beat it if it had already died?"

"No, it has nothing to do with horses, but bull," he replied. "Don't milk the bull, you know?"

"Uh, I see." I was happy to see he kept his sense of humor even after an emotional ordeal.

But his failure in love demoralized him. He declined all friends' invitations for social gatherings after that. His bad mood even made him lose his position in his new company. He began to frequently hit the bottle.

It was only when Lin Ling, a bookstore clerk, entered his life two months ago that he began to emerge out of the shadows.

Earlier this week, I happened to pass by his apartment and dropped in on him. He was preparing for a job interview the next day.

He told me happily that his new relationship made him rethink the meaning of life. "She is my luck fairy because I regained my confidence in life," he said. "With her love, trust and encouragement, I found good luck is always with



me now. I have gained several new interview offers this month. I have never been so lucky."

"Then break a leg tomorrow at your job interview. I hope that you get the job," I said.

"The position is not worth the price of a broken leg," he answered severely.

"No, no, you misunderstand," I grinned. "Break a leg means good luck!"

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. She felt dizzy when the plane was taxing to the gate.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): Here we are faced with the always baffling magic of turning a verb into a participle. "To taxi," as a verb, means "(of an aircraft or flier) to move slowly on the ground or water before gathering speed to take off or after landing." This sentence is all right except for the participle, which is wrongly transformed. When the verb "to taxi" is turned into a participle, it is either taxiing or taxying. So, the sample sentence should read: She felt dizzy when the plane was taxiing to the gate. Similar grammatical complexities we should be aware of include: frolic – frolicking; traffic – trafficking; die – dying; dye – dyeing; panic – panicking; pique – piquing; etc.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Yikes! English is so hard! I apologize on behalf of English teachers everywhere. I also still believe you can do it!

2. China stands on its promise to make the renminbi flexible.

ZS: In this case, the phrase "stand on" is wrongly used. "To stand on" means "to depend on" or "to be based on." For instance: to stand on the facts. He does not stand upon ceremony. Obviously it does not fit into the sense the writer wishes to express here. As a matter of fact, it should be "stand by," which means "to adhere to; to abide by (as a statement or agreement); keep; maintain." So, one should be able to stand by one's promise. This is the right phrase fitting the occasion. Let's see: China stands by its promise to make the renminbi flexible.

TBZ: Another tough grammar point without a clear reason why one way is correct and the other way is not. It seems to me that "China stands by its promise" because China, in this case, is the promise-maker. We, the people, are the "promise-receivers," and we "stand on the promise" trusting or "depending on" the delivery of China's promise to us.

3. Crackerjack

ZS: Crackerjack now means a person or thing of super ability or grade. For instance: He is a crackerjack at dominoes. The word can refer to fast horses, skilled baseball players or anything of superior quality. As a matter of fact, the word has a history. Legend says that the name "Cracker Jack" came into use in 1896 when an enthusiastic salesman, who was selling popcorn and peanut confection products of the Rueckheims, exclaimed, "That's really a cracker, Jack!" (Jack being the generic name of any man-on-the-street.) The word "crackerjack" was slang in those days, meaning "something very pleasing." The Rueckheim brothers (who were from a German immigrant family) loved the expression so much that they received a trademark for "Cracker Jack" under F.W. Rueckheim & Brother of Chicago. Their slogan, "The more you eat, the more you want" was also copyrighted that year.

TBZ: That is exactly how I think of Cracker Jack. We used to buy it at the Five-and-Dime Store in a little white cardboard box with red, white and blue lettering and a vender in one corner, like one might see in the old days at a baseball diamond, calling "Cracker Jack!" Inside the box was caramel corn and you always got a small plastic toy. You had to eat the whole box before you could get the toy, sticky with sugary goodness and stuck to the bottom of the box.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

The Do Not Come in Corporation

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

Now, I did not study business management but I suspect that naming your company the "Do Not Come in Corporation" would send your potential customers the wrong message, regardless of how clever it may have sounded in the boardroom. What is this sign trying to tell us?

Individually, each character has several meanings. *Fei*, the first character, on its own can mean: wrong, blame, run counter to, insist on or Africa. *Gong* has even more definitions: general, public, make (something) public, fair, international, official business, authorities, male – including husband (or "old man") – father-in-law and duke. Whew! If you have studied a little bit of Chinese, you know that most Chinese words are two characters put together. For example, *feigong* might mean "non-public." This might be a clue to the true meaning of this sign.

The last two characters individually are more straightforward. *Mo* means: nobody, nothing or not; *ru* means enter, agree with, join or income. Putting the two



Photo by Tiffany Tan

together, however, *moru* becomes "stuck in the mire," and the whole sign, *feigongmoru*, reads "a non-public place to get stuck in the mire." A good guess! According to the native speaker, this sign means: if you are not official, do not belong to this work unit or to this workplace in any fashion, please don't come in. Or, more simply put, because this is a do-not-come-in corp., there is "No Admittance Except for Business."

The Hangover (2009)

Movie of the week

Even without an all-star cast and huge budget, it's not hard to see how *The Hangover* won over audiences. It is smart and funny, and looking back it was one of the best comedies of last year.

Whereas most trailers show all the funny moments in one 60-second clip, this movie packs enough laughs to keep you busy for the first hour.

Overall, it is hilarious from beginning to end. Even Mike Tyson shows up for an oddball cameo appearance as himself.

Synopsis

Only two days before his marriage to Tracy Garner, Doug Billings, his two friends Phil Wenneck and Stu Price and Tracy's eccentric brother Alan head out together to party in Vegas. They rent a pricey villa at Caesar's Palace and head for the rooftop to have a good time.

Three of them wake the next day with a hangover and are unable to recall what happened the night before. With the villa in a wreck, they find that they have a baby in the closet and a grown tiger in the bathroom. Stu is missing a tooth and has a prostitute for a bride, and Doug has vanished.

Chaos ensues as the trio attempt to retrace their steps so they can find Doug and bring him home in one piece before the wedding.

Scene 1

(Doug and his friends drive to Vegas.)

Alan (A): It says here we should work in teams. Who wants to be my **spotter** (1)?

Doug (D): I don't think you should be doing too much gambling tonight, Alan.

A: Gambling? Who said anything about gambling? It's not gambling when you know you're gonna win. Counting cards is a foolproof system.

Stu (S): It's also illegal.

A: It's not illegal, it's **frowned upon** (2), like drinking on an airplane.

Phil (P): I'm pretty sure that's illegal too.

A: Yeah, maybe after 9/11, where everybody got so sensitive. Thanks a lot, bin Laden.

D: Either way, you gotta be super smart to count cards, buddy, OK?

A: Oh, really? Well maybe we should tell that to Rain Man because he practically bankrupted a casino, and he was a **retard** (3).

P: What?

A: He was a retard.

Scene 2

(Phil, Stu and Alan wake in the morning but cannot find Doug. Unable to remember anything about the last night, they retrace their steps to a hospital.)

Doctor: OK, here we go. Patient name, Phil Wenneck, 2:45 a.m. Arrival. Minor concussion, like I said. Some bruising. Pretty standard.

S: Do you mind if I look? I'm actually a doctor.

Doctor: Yeah, you said that several times last night. But really, you're just a dentist. OK, this is interesting. Your blood work came in this morning. They found a large amount of **Ruphylin** in your system.

P: Ruphylin?

Doctor: Roofies. Commonly known as the date-rape drug.

P: What, so, what are you saying, I was raped last night?

Doctor: Actually ...

(He checks the report.)

I don't think so. But someone did **slip** (4) you the drug. I'm not surprised you don't remember anything.

A: Doc, none of us can remember anything from last night. Remember?

P: Yeah. How could someone have drugged all of us?

Doctor: I wouldn't worry about it. The stuff's out of your system. You're gonna be fine.

P: Wait, wait, wait. Please, doctor. Is there anything else? Like, something we may have been talking about, or some place we were going?

Doctor: Actually, there was something. You guys kept talking about some wedding last night.

P: You know what? I want the \$100 back.

Doctor: No, no. Easy. You kept talking about some wedding you just came from. At the, uh, Best Little Chapel. You kept saying how sick the wedding was and getting all crazy about it. OK, I hope this helps. I really have to leave.

P: Best Little Chapel, do you know where that is?

Doctor: I do. It's at the corner of Get A Map and F—k Off. I'm a doctor, not a tour guide. Figure it out yourself, OK? You're big boys.



Scene 3

(Everyone is surprised to learn that Stu married a stranger last night.)

A: Hey, Phil, what about my dad's car?

P: I'm sure Doug has it. We'll get it back.

S: Then I vote we torch the cop car and all this s---t with it.

P: Torch it? Who are you?

S: I don't know, Phil. Apparently I'm a guy who marries complete strangers. This whole situation is completely f---ked. These mugs. This hat. This car. It's all evidence of a night that never happened. That is why we're torching all of it.

P: Whoa, I'm a school teacher, I got a family, OK? I'm **all for secrecy** (5), but I'm not gonna torch a cop car.

S: Fine. I'll do it.

A: Can I help?

S: Yeah, thanks.

P: And how exactly are you gonna do that?

A: Easy. You just pour kerosene over a ferret, light it on both ends, put it in. They're attracted to the gas lines.

S: What? A ferret?

A: Yeah. Yeah. Or a tamed raccoon, but it's a lot of trouble.

S: Does it matter if it's tamed?

A: Yeah, because if it's untamed, it won't take the kerosene as well.

Vocabulary

1. **spotter:** a person or thing that watches or observes

2. **frown upon:** look disapprovingly upon

3. **retard:** disparaging term for a mentally impaired person

4. **slip:** here it means to sneak something in (a drink)

5. **all for secrecy:** here it means ready to keep a secret

(By Wang Yu)